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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the workshop conference reported in this publication was to provide: recommendations on developments in preservice teacher education and professional development for teachers of languages other than English (LOTE), advice to the Board of Teacher Registration and universities on issues related to the preparation and registration of LOTE teachers, and a forum for discussion on the nature and content of a minimum skills package for LOTE teachers which would set levels of language proficiency and assure competence in current teaching methods. The conference was opened by Robin Sullivan, Director of Studies in the Queensland Department of Education, who emphasized the need to ensure adequate preparation and inservice education for LOTE teachers. Presentations by three keynote speakers followed: "Lote in Australia: A Personal Perspective" (Barry Leal); "Planning for a Minimum Skills 'Package'" (Nancy Viviani); and "Specifying and Assessing Skills for Language Teachers" (David Ingram). Other presentations included "LOTE Minimum Skills 'Package'" (Laura Commins and Penny Mackay); and "Teachers' Reactions to the Notion of a LOTE Minimum Skills 'Package'" (Val Staermose). A report of workshop group discussions and recommendations regarding a LOTE minimum skills and assessment are included. Appendixes contain references to three conference background readings and lists of the conference subcommittee members and conference participants. (LL)

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TEACHING OF LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (LOTE):

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER REGISTRATION

SP 034 682

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TEACHING OF LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (LOTE): IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER REGISTRATION

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Board of Teacher Registration
Toowong, 1992

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PREFACE

In view of the priority given by the current Queensland State Government to extending the teaching and learning of Languages Other Than English in Queensland schools, the Board of Teacher Registration, in conjunction with the Languages and Cultures Unit of the Department of Education, convened a one-day workshop conference on 8 November 1991 titled *Teaching of Languages Other Than English: Implications for Teacher Education and Teacher Registration*.

This report provides speakers' presentations, overviews of the conference proceedings and workshop group discussions, and recommendations arising from the conference.

The contribution of the following people to the conference is gratefully acknowledged:

- Ms Robin Sullivan, Director of Studies, Department of Education, who opened the conference;
- the speakers, Professor Barry Leal of Macquarie University, Professor David Ingram of Griffith University, Professor Nancy Viviani, Adviser on Languages and Cultures to the Minister, Ms Laura Commins, LOTE Consultant, Sunshine Coast Region, and Ms Val Staermose, Capricornia Regional LOTE Coordinator;
- Ms Laura Commins and Ms Penny McKay, Lecturer and Projects Officer, Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, who prepared the Discussion Paper on a LOTE Minimum Skills 'Package';
- The chairpersons of the various sessions: Professor Peter Cryle, Head, Department of Romance Languages, University of Queensland, Mrs Cheryl Capra, regional LOTE coordinator and Chairperson of the MLTAQ Primary Standing Committee, Mr John Bissett, Senior Lecturer, Language and Literacy Education, Queensland University of Technology, and Mr Allan Langdon, Manager, Languages and Cultures Unit, Department of Education;
- Members of the Conference Planning Committee (listed in Appendix II);
- Conference participants (listed in Appendix III);
- Mrs Jackie Sorensen of the Board of Teacher Registration secretariat, who typed conference materials and this report through several drafts.

The publication of this report was undertaken jointly by the Board of Teacher Registration and the Languages and Cultures Unit of the Department of Education.

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OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

In view of the Queensland State Government's priority of extending the teaching and learning of languages other than English (LOTEs), the Board of Teacher Registration and the Languages and Cultures Unit of the Department of Education jointly sponsored and organised a one-day workshop conference. The conference, titled *Teaching of Languages Other Than English: Implications for Teacher Education and Teacher Registration*, was held at the Conference Centre in Education House in Brisbane on Friday, 8 November 1991.

The goals of the conference were:

- To develop recommendations on desirable developments in preservice teacher education and professional development for LOTE teachers.
- To provide advice to the Board of Teacher Registration and universities on issues to do with the preparation and registration of LOTE teachers.
- To provide a forum for discussion on the nature and content of a minimum skills package for LOTE teachers which would set levels of language proficiency and assure competence in current teaching methods.

Prior to the conference, participants had been sent a copy of the July 1991 LOTE Statement by the Queensland Minister for Education, an extract from Professor Barry Leal's 1991 *Report of the Review of the Teaching of Modern Languages in Higher Education*, and a copy of a discussion paper prepared by Ms Penny McKay and Ms Laura Commins on a LOTE Minimum Skills Assessment Package.

The conference was attended by approximately 70 participants, including representatives of teacher employing authorities, the language and education departments of universities, curriculum authorities, the Board of Teacher Registration, the Languages and Cultures Unit, teacher unions, and LOTE teachers and coordinators.

The conference was opened by Ms Robin Sullivan, Director of Studies in the Queensland Department of Education, who emphasised the need to ensure adequate preparation and inservice education for LOTE teachers in order to implement quality LOTE education programs for children in Queensland schools.

Presentations by three keynote speakers followed in a session chaired by Professor Peter Cryle of the University of Queensland. Professor Barry Leal of Macquarie University provided an interesting historical perspective on the changing attitudes

to the teaching of LOTEs in Australia. He also addressed the difficulties to be faced in order to promote the teaching of LOTEs today and presented an informative account of recent developments in LOTE education. Professor Nancy Viviani, Ministerial Adviser on languages and cultures, outlined the State Government's targets in the area of LOTE and stressed the need for quality LOTE teachers. She presented a number of points for participants to consider in workshop discussions concerning the development and implementation of a LOTE minimum skills 'package'. Participants were provided with technical information concerning the specifying and assessing of LOTE teachers' skills by Professor David Ingram from Griffith University. Professor Ingram described specialist language teaching competence, language proficiency and cultural knowledge, and cross-cultural attitudes as skills to be assessed.

In the panel presentation, chaired by Mrs Cheryl Capra of the Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland, Mrs Val Staermose, Regional LOTE Coordinator from Capricornia region, presented some reactions from classroom teachers and third-year LOTE teacher education students to the notion of a LOTE minimum skills 'package'. Ms Laura Commins, LOTE Consultant from Sunshine Coast region, clarified and elaborated on aspects of the discussion paper about a LOTE minimum skills package.

There were two small group discussion sessions. In the first, participants in heterogeneous groups debated general issues concerning the nature and content of a minimum skills package and the implications for preservice and inservice teacher education. Results of this discussion were compiled and presented in the plenary session after lunch by conference rapporteur, Mr John Bissett, chair of the conference planning committee.

In the second workshop group session, participants divided into more homogeneous groups according to areas of interest (teachers, universities and employing authorities) and the issues concerning a minimum skills package were considered in relation to implications for the particular interest group. A spokesperson from each group presented a report in the final plenary session which was chaired by Mr Allan Langdon, Manager of the Languages and Cultures Unit of the Department of Education.

The conference was closed by Professor Nancy Viviani, who stated that the conference had demonstrated that a LOTE minimum skills package was accepted as necessary, but had also highlighted issues to be considered more thoroughly. Professor Viviani looked forward to the next steps in the process of development and implementation of such a 'package', including the establishment of a reference group, and emphasised the need for continuing consultation.

OPENING ADDRESS

Ms Robin Sullivan
Director, Studies Directorate, Department of Education

Today marks an important event because we have assembled the three vital stakeholders in the achievement of effective second language learning and teaching in schools - the employing authorities, the tertiary institutions and the Board of Teacher Registration. Your meeting is quite historic as a three-way summit meeting of this type where the needs of language teachers are specifically addressed is not a common occurrence in Australia. I welcome you all here and wish you well in your deliberations.

The motivation for your discussion is the principle of quality in language teaching and learning which is one of six basic principles for Languages Other Than English put forward by the Minister in his Statement of July this year. Our challenge, as seen by the Minister, is to raise the quality of language teaching. It is self-evident that if we want to have programs with high quality output then we need to have high quality input. For the purposes of the output from this seminar it is obvious, in looking around the room, that we have gathered the people who will provide us with high quality input in our discussions. The outcomes from these discussions are vital if we are going to provide quality teaching of languages other than English to our children.

The goal of the Minister's Statement on LOTE is that 'all young Queenslanders should have the opportunity to gain the intellectual, cultural and economic benefits of an education in a foreign language'. These benefits are accrued only if the programs to which young people are exposed, are of a high quality. In order to have high quality programs the teachers who are delivering them need to have appropriate training and skills. We do have in our schools at present quite a number of very good quality programs but unfortunately the quality varies and this needs to be addressed. It is time that the teacher of a LOTE is recognised as a specialist who has particular skills both in language ability and in imparting this facility to learners. With all these factors in mind therefore, we are considering the introduction of a minimum skills package for all teachers of LOTE.

This specialisation of LOTE teachers has a considerable impact on the **training** and **recruitment** of our teachers. We need to guarantee that the preservice training is of the calibre which enables these students to qualify as employable teachers of LOTE. This is extremely important in the light of the intention to

offer a LOTE to all levels of the primary school. In order to implement this we need primary teaching students to graduate from a course which has given them continuous exposure to both the language and the culture of their chosen LOTE.

In the education of potential language teachers we need to ensure that they receive every opportunity to have continued access throughout the entire course to the LOTE that they are learning. It is recognised that skill in a LOTE is achieved by constant exposure to the language and by numerous opportunities to use the language for real purposes. Language learners also need to be confronted with models of language teaching which will stand them in good stead when they are in front of a class of children. By having a variety of methods made available to them teachers can adopt the one that most suits the circumstances and which can cater for the individual needs of the learner.

In the recruitment of teachers of LOTE we need to be sure that they are capable of, and have the necessary skills to teach effectively. At this point members of the Languages and Cultures Unit are involved with the interviews of graduate teachers who intend teaching a LOTE in Department of Education schools. Institutions which are preparing teachers for service in our schools need to be aware of what will be expected of these teachers when they are in front of the class. Knowing the language is not enough. There are aspects such as knowledge of current appropriate methodology and classroom management techniques which are also essential. We have a particular challenge here with respect to native speakers of the language who might or might not have teaching qualifications. The professional development of these people has already been addressed by some institutions and this needs to be expanded. Native speakers are a valuable asset whom we must use as efficiently as possible.

As well as the teachers in training we currently have a large number of potential teachers of LOTE who need access to quality inservice programs to give them confidence and to prepare them to play an important role in the delivery of quality LOTE programs. These people are willing and keen to have their skills upgraded so that their possible contribution is not lost. For those people who are currently making a small contribution but who are limited by their lack of skills we need to develop a sound and practical inservice mode. A survey has been conducted and we now have a data base which records the preferences and needs of all teachers who are currently employed and who have an interest in LOTE.

So far, in our attempt to upgrade the skills of LOTE teachers we have supported an exchange program with China, initiated a one-year graduate diploma course in Japanese with time spent in the country, awarded scholarships both this year and last year for students preparing to become LOTE teachers, and have contributed a

considerable amount of money to assist teachers' own initiatives in upgrading their skill by undertaking intensive courses here and overseas.

It is time now then, to think deeply about the needs of the teachers in training and those in schools so that our plans for providing quality programs through the employment of suitably qualified LOTE specialists are achievable. To this end I believe that your discussion today will be fruitful and will put us well on the way to achieving our goal. The spirit of cooperation which is shown here today is a hopeful sign that we will be in a position to offer high quality LOTE programs to the children in our schools.

LOTE IN AUSTRALIA: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Professor Barry Leal
Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University

Before addressing the very general subjects that I am to speak on this morning, let me say a specific word or two about the Minister's July 1991 statement on LOTE.

I congratulate those involved with producing this statement since I consider it one of the most significant ministerial statements on language education policy for many years. It is well-informed and balanced in its approach, and it does not allow the inevitable political rhetoric of such documents to overshadow the important educational decisions issues that it addresses. Although there may be a tendency to underestimate some of the difficulties in implementing the policies presented, there is a welcome strain of realism that informs the document, especially in the section on 'Quality in teaching and learning'. My remarks this morning will underline the importance of such a realistic approach, even at the risk of painting a rather bleak picture.

What I *particularly* like is the clarity and the cogency of the rationale given for language learning. The Minister presents three reasons: intellectual development, cultural appreciation and economic interest. It is encouraging that he puts the intellectual and the cultural first. We need to stress constantly that unless we get right our intellectual and cultural approaches to language education, then the trade, tourism, finance, scientific and technological advantages of knowing a LOTE will always be threatened because they will lack a solid base. This was a strong emphasis in *Widening Our Horizons*, the Report of the Commonwealth Review that I directed during 1990. If education is a process of turning from cocksure ignorance to thoughtful uncertainty, then the intellectual and cultural values of language learning need to be highlighted in any educational policy.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Minister's statement is that it illustrates and promotes the considerable change in public perceptions about the learning of LOTE over the past few years. From being considered as a peripheral skill for the idle or the pretentious, knowledge of another language is on the way to being seen as an essential element in a modern individual's education. In this context I would like to talk to you this morning about three things.

First, let me give you a personal perspective on some of the changes in attitude to LOTE learning that have occurred in my lifetime. Abraham Lincoln once said 'If

we but know where we are, we can perhaps know where we ought to go'. Second, I shall mention some of the difficulties that we face in coping with the present situation. And finally I shall list some of the interesting recent developments in courses involving LOTE in Australian and overseas tertiary institutions.

I went to high school in Sydney a little while after the Second World War. This was the age of selective high schools which were characterised by the teaching of languages. The prestige of a high school was inclined to depend on the number of languages that it taught. Knowledge of a language other than English was considered to be a sign of education and a properly educated person was expected to at least have a reading knowledge of one.

However, the economic and political dominance of the US after 1945 had some effect on this view. The pre-eminence of Britain in the nineteenth century had made English an important world language and this tendency was continued in the mid-twentieth century by the dominance of the United States. English was considered the logical language for many parts of the developing world to use. In consequence the place of languages other than English in many educational systems tended to decline.

During the same period Australia's migration program was in full swing and the number of non-English speaking migrants increased. Strangely, this did not provoke an increase in the learning of languages other than English. In fact, quite the contrary! The migration program served to aid and abet anti-LOTE forces in the community. The opinion became widespread that there was no need to learn languages other than English. There were now enough migrants to cope with the unlikely event that anyone important did not understand English.

I suspect that there was another reason for the decline in the learning of languages other than English at this time. The presence of so many migrants who sooner or later became bilingual suggested to many from the Anglo-Saxon establishment that being bilingual was perhaps not so important as they had thought. When the relatively uneducated Giuseppe and Heidi living in a not so affluent part of the city could speak two languages, then surely there must be more important things to do with one's education than learning a second language.

Science and technology soon filled the educational gap. Here again the United States was the dominating country and such leadership emphasised the place of English as the world's first language.

Now what was happening to the Australian educational system while all this was going on? Let me take the case of New South Wales, since it provides an interesting example of the general situation. In the late 1950s the Director-General of Education, Dr Harold Wyndham, determined that he would break what he called the 'stranglehold of languages' on the secondary curriculum. The Wyndham scheme was introduced into secondary schools in the early 1960s and this had the effect of curtailing drastically the teaching of LOTE, which were not part of the core curriculum. Dr Wyndham succeeded beyond all expectations in his project. Today in New South Wales it is impossible to find a single language teacher in one-third of all high schools.

At the same time languages were dropped from university entry requirements and also from degree requirements for the Bachelor of Arts. I think I am correct in saying that by the mid-1970s no tertiary institution in Australia required a language either for entrance or for any of its degrees. Between 1967 and 1975 the percentages of students studying languages for their secondary education certificate declined from 40 per cent to 15 per cent. At the moment the figure is around 12.6 per cent.

Now these are some of the changes that took place in educational, political and social life up to around 1975. Their effects are very much still with us today. Consider, for example, these:

1. We have at the moment in our various bureaucracies a whole generation of policy makers and decision takers who have little or no understanding or appreciation of a language other than English. One of the real difficulties is when they take it upon themselves to make decisions on language matters without taking appropriate advice. The results can be disastrous.

2. A second result is that Australia is totally unprepared for the relative decline of American dominance that has become so obvious in the past few years. Although the United States remains a very important power economically and politically, it is by no means unchallenged in these areas. In particular we are quite unprepared for the rise of non-English speaking economies in the Pacific. Similarly, our Anglo-centric approach to culture, economics and politics has left us unprepared for the rise of non-English speaking economies in Europe.

3. We are also totally unprepared for the influx of tourists arriving on our shores in rapidly increasing numbers. At the moment we have about 2.5 million tourists arriving each year, but this figure will at least double by the end of the decade. Unless we can relate to the cultures and speak the

languages of the people who come to visit us, we shall not benefit from tourism to the extent that we might.

4. Another result of our neglect of LOTE is that English speaking Australians have a totally inadequate appreciation of the difficulties encountered by migrants who do not speak English. This has led to gross disadvantages for such people, especially in the fields of education, health and law. Under such circumstances, it has been difficult for multiculturalism to succeed as a policy.

5. Added to this is the lack of recognition of the linguistic resources we have in our migrant community. All of us are aware that the expression 'the linguistic resources brought by migrants' has been around for quite some time, but we are equally aware that only lip service has been paid to it.

6. Another result of our neglect of LOTE has been our poor performance as a country at the diplomatic level. Things are slowly changing in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but up to now inadequate numbers of our diplomats have been competent in the languages of the countries in which they serve.

It wasn't until the late 1970s that evidence of a change of thinking began to appear. Multiculturalism emerged as a national policy and since that time the linguistic implications of this policy have gradually been drawn out with regard to the place of 'ethnic' or 'community' languages in the Australian community. This has led to the increased availability of these languages in primary and secondary education and their encouragement at tertiary level by special government funding. The recommendations of the 1978 Galbally Report on post-arrival programs and services for migrants led to a range of welfare oriented courses offered particularly in the former college sector to service the needs of migrants. In 1984 the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts produced a document entitled 'National Language Policy', containing the results of an enquiry into 'the development and implementation of a coordinated language policy for Australia'. You are all well aware that in 1987 Joe Lo Bianco put together the document entitled 'National Policy on Languages'. This led to the adoption of a more coherent approach to the place of languages in Australian society and to the formation of the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education as well as the National Languages Institute of Australia.

This evidence of a change of thinking has largely been the result of pressure from migrants, especially through the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the various State Ethnic Affairs Commissions and the Ethnic Communities Councils. In the latter

part of the 1980s, however, economic realities have most obviously driven the cause of LOTE.

In outlining some of the effects of attitudes to LOTE since the 1950s I have touched on several aspects of the second point in my address: the difficulties that we face in coping with the present situation, characterised, after years of neglect, by renewed enthusiasm for LOTE learning. There are obviously many difficulties to be faced. I shall limit myself to mentioning three: the attitudes of tertiary staff; the recruitment of teachers; and the raising of standards.

Attitudes of tertiary language teachers have been influenced by the general LOTE situation over the past two or three decades in a variety of ways that we need to understand:

1. The decline in interest in languages at both secondary and tertiary levels has in many tertiary language departments produced something of a ghetto mentality, in which the perceived irrelevance of LOTE has, somewhat perversely, often become a source of pride. Lack of usefulness has tended to constitute a guarantee of academic respectability. Tertiary language academics, especially those now of mature years, like to picture themselves as defending citadels of traditional culture against the increasing hordes of commercially oriented economics and accounting students. Perhaps they are to some extent justified in this perception, but it does not help very much in adapting to an apparently sudden public awareness of the *usefulness* of language competence. The situation is exacerbated by the traditional (though rapidly changing) stress on the study of literature at tertiary level. Literature still tends to be associated with highly prized research, while language is linked to teaching, which for many has lesser status.

2. This ghetto mentality has, I suspect, over the years reduced contact between secondary and tertiary teachers. Appalled at the decline of language learning in schools, and resentful at their decreasing influence on the secondary curriculum, many academics have been inclined to leave the secondary sector to its own devices and to retreat still further into their relatively comfortable (though threatened) academic cocoon. In some extreme cases this expresses itself in the perverse pride at taking absolutely no account of the fact that many of their students will end up as language teachers.

3. It is probably true that *most* University schools and departments look askance at those students whose *primary* interest is not in their subject. I

> fear that this is particularly true in the LOTE area. It expresses itself notably in a reluctance on the part of some academics to teach language for special purposes. This is, I imagine, why some of the more recently introduced so-called 'economic' languages, like Japanese, have been situated in Faculties of Commerce or Economics rather than in Departments of Modern Languages. Certainly this reluctance to teach other than genuine language-oriented students is a real problem in many UK universities, where the demand for languages from most of the professional faculties is intense as 1993 approaches. The fact of the matter is, of course, that most academics are not trained to teach language in this way. Moreover, the general contraction in the size of language departments over the past 20 years has precluded the infusion of much new blood and discouraged new orientations.

The recruitment of teachers to usher in the brave new world of language learning announced in the Braddy document obviously needs to take account of these problems at tertiary level. My general impression after reviewing all higher education LOTE departments in Australia is that, despite an immense amount of goodwill among language teachers, there is wide cynicism about the seriousness of government pronouncements on LOTE matters. Accompanying this is the fear that stress on the economic usefulness of LOTE will bring an unhealthy emphasis on short-term language skills at the cost of the traditional stress on language-learning as a broadening, educative experience.

When we turn from the attitudes of academics to those of their students in the situation is even more worrying. Most students consider teaching an unattractive profession. A reason for this was suggested in a submission to *Widening Our Horizons* from Gay Reeves of the University of Newcastle:

> At present comparatively few students enter university with the aim of becoming LOTE teachers. The generally depressing LOTE situation in government schools where teachers have been struggling to retain LOTE study does not present LOTE teaching as an attractive or satisfying career.

I have the impression that things are beginning to change, but a good deal of work needs to be done to alter these perceptions. For example, because of the lack of LOTE teachers, the NSW government has had to postpone until 1996 the introduction of a mere 100 hours of LOTE instruction for pupils in secondary schools.

It is obvious that, until language teaching is once again perceived as an attractive career and LOTE teaching resources are built up in University departments, all possible sources of language competence in the community will need to be tapped. Recommendation 21 of *Widening Our Horizons* reads: 'that universities and colleges be encouraged to provide appropriate courses, on a full-time and part-time basis, for appropriately educated and linguistically competent members of the community to enable them to gain formal recognition for their language competence, and to use it in an appropriate field or profession'. This is one obvious approach to the problem of teacher recruitment. There will have to be many others, including distance education, which at present is in a most unsatisfactory state. The results of an enquiry, sponsored by the National Languages Institute of Australia in June 1990, into the employment and supply of LOTE teachers is eagerly awaited.

It is crucial that, despite problems of teacher recruitment, adequate standards of language competence and pedagogical training be insisted upon. I shall not say much about this subject, since Professor Viviani is to address the assessment question in a few minutes and I also know that it is a question dear to Professor Ingram's heart. Let me just say that it is important that any system of language proficiency assessment be accompanied by a range of opportunities for teachers and students to improve their proficiency. The carrot is generally preferable to the stick; and the existence of multiple carrots will help overcome the impression that the proficiency assessment scheme is essentially a stick. *Widening Our Horizons* insists upon adequate in-country experience for LOTE teachers and recommends that by 1998 a period of residence in the target language country be a requirement for a language major. It is quite counter-productive to put in front of classes teachers who are inadequately trained and who are painfully aware of the fact. The whole area is a political, professional and moral minefield, but we must make our way through it.

In conclusion let me in just a few minutes tell you of some of the important developments involving LOTE at higher education level.

In the 1960s, language requirements disappeared from many US universities and colleges. During the 1980s they started to come back and recent figures suggest that the momentum is continuing, as Americans become aware that they must open themselves to other cultures and languages if they are to preserve a dominant role in the world. Business and management courses are increasingly making provision for knowledge of a LOTE in their programs, and some are now insisting upon it. You may have noticed that some management schools in Australia are starting to reflect this tendency and to 'internationalise' their programs. They are beginning

to understand that LOTE study must permeate the curriculum of all the professions.

In the United Kingdom, awareness of this necessity has been forced into the consciousness of the professions and the world of business by the disappearance of economic and educational barriers in Europe at the end of next year. Languages have been taught in conjunction with professional courses in a number of universities and polytechnics for some time, but now the pressure to extend such teaching has become intense. Many foreign observers of the situation as well as British academics are rather bemused by the cultural turn-around as panic grips those that fear they may not be able to survive in the Europe of tomorrow.

On the continent, the possibilities of freer movement around the countries of Europe, epitomised at the educational level by the Erasmus program, has led to a re-evaluation of language policies. Countries like Holland, Sweden and Spain are having second thoughts about their past tendency to favour the learning of English often to the exclusion of other languages. They too are realising that English is not enough and are refocusing on languages such as German and French.

Back home in Australia the linking of courses in commerce and economics with a LOTE at higher education level has become commonplace. Indeed, quite frequently the language, usually Asian, is taught from within a Faculty of Commerce or Economics rather than being based in Modern Languages or in a Faculty of Arts. The phenomenon shows a welcome consciousness by the business-oriented that LOTE are important, but it also shows the structural difficulties that universities have in dealing with a subject that refuses to remain within the confines of a department or faculty. One way to overcome this problem has been to offer double degrees. This has long been possible with law, but in recent years a combined engineering/arts degree has been instituted at Monash University, with a similar combination being possible at the University of New South Wales. This enables engineers to take a language along with their normal studies and to add only one year to their course.

Time does not allow me to add to these examples, but I assure you that there are many more which indicate equally well that recognition of the importance of LOTE is growing both here and overseas and leading to quite dramatic changes in educational programs. In all this ferment I have no real worries about the survival of the traditional language and cultural studies that some academics see under extreme threat. I think that we have before us the wonderful opportunity of broadening the language base of our educational programs at all levels. If such a revision is effectively communicated then the language and literature expert has little to fear.

PLANNING FOR A MINIMUM SKILLS 'PACKAGE'

Professor Nancy Viviani
Consultant on Languages and Cultures to the Minister for Education

Professor Viviani commenced her address by outlining three of the Government's targets in the area of LOTE:

1. that every child in Years 6, 7 and 8 will be learning a LOTE by 1994 (in October 1991 40-45 per cent of schools had introduced a LOTE to Years 6 or 6 and 7)[1];

2. that at least 20 per cent of high school graduates will have studied a LOTE by the year 2000 (at present the figure is about 8 per cent);

3. that eventually LOTEs will be introduced to Years P-5.

In order to achieve these goals a large number of skilled LOTE teachers will be required. It was in this context that the notion of a minimum skills package was proposed.

Professor Viviani listed the following questions as an agenda of process issues for participants to consider in their group discussions:

1. Who will construct the package?
   - The package should include assessment of language proficiency and language teaching skills.
   - It should be expertly developed - by both universities and teachers.

2. Who will administer the package?
   - Possibly the Department of Education. As the principal employer it has a major interest, and could adopt the package as one criterion for selection of new teachers.

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[1]As of March 1992, 68 per cent of schools had introduced a LOTE to years 6 or 6 and 7.

- This may lead to a backwash effect where universities pre-test course entrants using the package.

3. What should be the nature of BTR Guidelines to universities for preservice teacher education courses in relation to teachers of LOTE?

4. What should be the nature of preservice teacher education in language methodology?

5. How should the various interest groups be consulted about the package?
   - What could be the role of the Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland?
   - What could be the role of teacher unions?
   - What could be the role of the Department of Education's Human Resources Directorate?
   - How would universities be functionally involved?

6. If the Department of Education administers the package, who within the Department will administer it and how?
   - The Human Resources Directorate as part of the hiring process?
   - Administrators will need to be trained - how?

7. When is this to be introduced?
   - Possibly a 'dry run' by the end of 1992, followed by introduction in 1993.

8. Is this package going to be flexible?
   - Does it need to be reviewed each year?
   - Should a reference group be established?

9. To whom will this package apply?
   - Only to incoming teachers?
   - In a modified form, to teachers already in service?
   - Will a modified form be needed for teachers who are native speakers of LOTEs?

10. How will individual teachers know if they can measure up?
    - All LOTE teachers to be assessed on the package should first undertake professional development.

SPECIFYING AND ASSESSING SKILLS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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1 WHY SPECIFY MINIMUM SKILLS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS?

This is undoubtedly the most exciting time in language teaching in Australia, but especially in Queensland, for at least 30 years. In contrast to the 1960s, '70s and much of the '80s when language teaching was increasingly seen as a fringe activity relevant only to the academic elite or literati, we have had, since 1984, a succession of national and State reports and more or less well articulated language policies that have identified language skills as of central importance, not only to education, but to the society at large and to economic development in particular. One may wish to debate whether there has not been too heavy an emphasis in recent years on the economic significance of language skills, not because that significance has been exaggerated (the present writer has argued strongly for it in other papers [e.g. Ingram, 1986, 1987, 1991] but because the emphasis has tended to distract from some of the other valuable roles and goals of language teaching and the other benefits that learners receive. Be that as it may, it is vital that language teachers capitalise on the new enthusiasm for the development of language skills in order to extend language teaching in the education system, that they respond positively to the new challenges that result from society's belief in the benefits derivable from language education, and that they demonstrate that the values they have claimed for language learning are achievable. This will not occur, however, unless the programs offered by language teachers at all levels are of high quality and develop the skills that the society and the individual learners need. The most fundamental, though not the only, prerequisite to high quality language learning programs are high quality language teachers with professional skills sufficient to enable them to guide their students towards the goals that respond to the needs of the society. The prerequisite to ensuring that language teachers have those skills is to specify them clearly, to provide valid, reliable and practical ways of assessing them, and to ensure that the teacher education system (both preservice and inservice) is capable of responding to any resultant teacher education needs.

In providing advice on a language education policy for Queensland schools, Ingram and John (1990) recommended that minimum criteria for language proficiency and methodology training be set for language teachers. This advice was accepted and steps taken by the Queensland Education Department in consultation with the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration to lead towards a 'minimum skills package' for teachers of languages other than English (LOTEs) in Queensland with the corollary implications that teachers entering the teaching service and possibly those already in the service would be assessed to see whether they had the minimum skills specified.

The notion of specifying and assessing teacher skills is often claimed to frighten teachers, to make them afraid that their jobs are at risk, or at least to fill them with a profound sense of professional incompetence and failure. It is essential, therefore, that the positive rather than the punitive aspects of the specification and assessment of teacher skills should be emphasised at all times. In particular, embarking on this process recognises that language teachers are not just inconsequential workers but are professionals whose individual activity profoundly benefits their students and the society, that teachers do seek to provide high quality programs, that their teaching is not superfluous but profoundly influences the lives and learning of their students, and that, in Trim's words in the Council of Europe's project on teacher education, 'the effectiveness of learning depends to a very large extent on the effectiveness of [their] teaching' (Widdowson, 1987: 7). In this context, the specification and assessment of teacher skills should be seen, not as seeking to prove incompetence or lack of commitment by teachers, but as acceptance by them that they need certain skills in order to carry out their duties satisfactorily and that, if those needs are specified, teachers are in a stronger position to demand and education administrators to provide suitable preservice, inservice and upgrading education programs. In fact, language teachers have already formally acknowledged this through their national professional organisation, the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA), since the *AFMLTA Policy on Language Teaching and Learning in Australia* states, in part, under the heading of 'Professional Standards':

1. Teachers of languages must have a minimum proficiency in the language appropriate to the level of the students and the nature of the courses being taught but, in any case, not less than S:3, L:3, W:3, R:3 on the ASLPR (Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings).

2. Teachers of languages must have a minimum of 120 hours of specialist training in language teaching methodology in

preservice programs or have completed the equivalent of a specialist graduate diploma in second language teaching ...

4. All teachers of languages must be required either by the end of their training program or within their first five years of teaching to spend, in total, at least one academic year in a country where the target language and culture is the first or dominant language and culture ...

5. Teacher education programs should provide the language proficiency, theoretical knowledge, teaching skills, personality development, and interpersonal skills needed to maximise learning and create an appropriate attitude towards language learning and the speakers of the other language.

6. Regular inservice education must be available to enable language teachers to continually update their teaching skills and to maintain and develop their language proficiency and cultural understanding ...

7. Language teachers must be strongly encouraged to join and actively participate in their Modern Language Teachers Association and other specialist professional organisations as the most effective means to their ongoing professional development.

In addition, if it is granted, as this quote from the AFMLTA policy indicates, that language teachers are concerned about their own competence, one of the important reasons for specifying and assessing teacher skills is that it assists teachers in the process of self-directed professional development. If teachers have available specifications of desirable skills (in both proficiency and teaching), if they know what their own level is, and if there is available to them a career path in which they are able to see promotional opportunities that reward them for enhanced skills (rather than take them out into some different field such as general educational administration), then they are more likely to seek to promote their own skills development. Self-assessment instruments in relevant areas (e.g. in language proficiency) can assist in this process and will be referred to subsequently.

II SPECIFYING SKILLS NEEDED BY LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The AFMLTA policy and the policy proposals prepared by Ingram and John (1990) indicate the sorts of skills that language teachers require. In addition to general teaching skills and the understanding of the educational process required of all teachers, they require specialist language teaching competence, proficiency

in the target language, understanding of the culture of the target language, and favourable cross-cultural attitudes.

II.1 Specifying Language Teaching Competence

In the same way that recent approaches to language proficiency assessment (see below) enable teachers' language proficiency and its features to be specified, it should be possible to specify the minimum teaching skills that language teachers require. Specialist language teaching competence has at least two components: relevant knowledge in the area of applied linguistics and the ability to apply that knowledge in practical language teaching situations. Language teaching is a rational process and, if teachers are to be able to teach flexibly in response to the needs of different students at different stages of language development, they need to understand the factors that determine how they teach and be able to apply them in classroom practice. The three basic determinants of methodology are the nature of language, the nature of learners (especially how they learn language), and the nature of society (including the learner's relationship to that society). Thus language teachers require in their applied linguistic training components of theoretical and descriptive linguistics, psycholinguistics and the psychology of language learning, and sociolinguistics, as well as language teaching methodology and teaching practice. Not least, if they are to be able to rationally adopt and apply modern progressive communicative methodology, they require formal knowledge of the grammatical system of the target language (encompassing its syntax, phonology and phonetics, discourse structuring, functions, lexis, meaning system, and paralinguistic features). These should comprise, according to the AFMLTA policy, at least 120 hours of course work or a graduate diploma in applied linguistics (AFMLTA Policy: 3) or, according to the recommendations made for the Queensland policy, at least two semester units in preservice programs (Ingram & John, 1990: 64-66) though such a time allocation assumes significant linguistic studies in other parts of the teachers' preservice degree program.

It is essential, but not sufficient, that language teachers be able to present good lessons, i.e. that they demonstrate good language teaching techniques in the classroom. It is necessary but not sufficient evidence that they are competent teachers that they be assessed in a teaching situation as being able to present satisfactory lessons: they must have the knowledge to back up those skills so that they are able to make rational judgments about how to teach, how to adjust their methods according to the demands of different teaching situations with different goals, different students, and

different materials and so that they can carry out teaching-related activities such as syllabus interpretation, workplan development, materials preparation, student assessment, and evaluation of their own programs. In other words, in addition to the skills of language teaching, they require enough background knowledge about language teaching that they can adopt a professional, rational and reflective approach to their teaching tasks. Hence, in addition to successfully performing in a classroom, teachers need to have had certain formal training in at least elementary applied linguistics.

II.2 Language Proficiency

The AFMLTA policy and the advice provided on the Queensland language education policy specify a minimum proficiency level in the target language of S:3, L:3, W:3, R:3, though the latter allows a proficiency of S:3, L:3, W:2, R:2 for character-based languages, not because the higher level is not desirable but in recognition of the more arduous learning task involved in reading and writing in such languages (AFMLTA Policy: 3, Ingram & John, 1990: 64-66).

There are a number of reasons to justify these proficiency requirements for all language teachers:

1. The Queensland policy recommendations state:

> Language proficiency is of fundamental importance for language teachers, not least because, unlike other subjects, the language is both the target and the medium of instruction and the teacher is often the principal (if not sole) model of the language for the student. Consequently, unless language teachers have adequate language proficiency, they cannot teach successfully, particularly since they will now be required to use the best of active communicative approaches. Teachers at all levels of language teaching must be able to present to their students a fluent, grammatically accurate, and situationally sensitive model of the language. (Ingram & John, 1990: 64)

2. The teacher at all levels must be able to use and present the language with a high degree of accuracy and appropriateness in a variety of situations and this flexibility is not reached before 3 on the ASLPR.

3. Language is meaningless without its associated culture; successful language teaching without culture-teaching is not possible, if only because the culture is the meaning-system that underlies the language and so, without the culture, the language is literally meaningless. If teachers are to be proficient in the language and to be able to act as the channel by which the learners are to be introduced to the culture underlying the language, they require a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the culture; hence they need to have read in or otherwise have experienced a wide cross-section of the culture (including the literature and other specialist areas) and to go on doing so. For this purpose, they require a minimum proficiency level of 3 since it is only at this level that significant ability to use the language in a variety of registers becomes possible.

4. If teachers are to maintain and go on developing their language skills, they need to have the confidence to use the language for a variety of purposes including reading, watching films and television, listening to radio broadcasts, overseas travel, and, especially social interaction with native speakers. The ability and confidence to cope with this variety of demands is unlikely before 3. In addition, as Carroll found in his 1960s survey of language use by language majors and teachers in the United States, the amount of use made of their target language by doctoral students and employees 'varied strikingly' with proficiency level, those around 3 or more making very much greater use of the language than those at lower proficiency levels (Carroll, 1967, 1967a, 1973). Clearly, if teachers are to be encouraged to maintain and develop their language skills without significant assistance from highly expensive inservice training programs, it is essential that they have proficiency levels of the sort specified.

5. It is significant that Carroll himself recommends 3 as the desirable minimum proficiency level for language teachers (Carroll, 1967, 1967a, 1973).

A critical issue in specifying the language proficiency of language teachers is whether it is general proficiency that is required or proficiency for teaching purposes. Any suggestion that it might be 'language for teaching purposes' that is specified and assessed suggests a serious misunderstanding of the purpose and practice of the classroom. On the one hand, there would seem to be a special register of the language used

in the classroom for classroom management and undoubtedly the teacher needs to be proficient in this. However, the form of the language that is taught to the students is that form used in real life and not just that used in the classroom: education provides knowledge and skills for life and is itself only a part of life. Thus the target language for teachers and what they must be proficient in is the general or non-specialist register (unless, perchance, they are teaching some sort of special purpose course such as French for Cooking or Japanese for Tour Guides). In any case, the special features of the language used for classroom management are undoubtedly forms that largely occur in the non-specialist register though probably more frequently in the classroom (e.g. interrogatives, imperatives, and lexical items marking the materials of the language classroom). In other words, it is general proficiency in the language that language teachers require and which should be assessed if a minimum proficiency level is to be required of teachers.

In this context, it is worth noting that the use of the term Minimum Vocational Proficiency for ASLPR Level 3 does not imply that Level 3 for a teacher is some sort of special purpose proficiency in the language for teaching purposes. As the introductory paper to the ASLPR (Ingram, 1979/1984) makes clear, the term 'Minimum Vocational Proficiency' is an example of synecdoche in which a part (the vocational register) is used to refer to the whole (register sensitivity and flexibility), i.e. one register, that for vocational purposes, is chosen to name the level at which the learners' language base is sufficiently large that they can adjust their language in response to situational requirements and can comprehend even where some items from a new register may be unknown.

II.3 Cultural Knowledge

It should go without saying that language teachers require thorough knowledge and understanding of the culture of the target language since language without culture is language without meaning: learning a language without its meaning system is no different from learning to manipulate algebraic symbols according to mathematical rules. Adequate cultural understanding involves not just factual knowledge but the acquisition of an integrated and coherent understanding of the target culture including cultural knowledge that is integrated with the language which inherently systematises it and illustrates its coherence. That understanding also entails the teachers' having a balanced view both of the second culture and their own together with the ability to distinguish individual from common characteristics, the ability to recognise the

underlying needs and interests of humanity from the ways in which they are realised in their own and the target culture. Such perception and perceptiveness should be generally non-judgmental though part of learning about other cultures involves the ability to recognise and articulate basic human values and to assess one's own and other cultures against these. What is not involved by a rational and balanced cultural awareness is the sort of 'jolly-jolly' enthusiasms for often atypical features of the other culture frequently presented in hypocritical contrast to the students' own culture whose apparent stolidity or crassness is made to appear inferior to the subtlety and artistic elegance of the other. Such an approach, all too often seen in traditional approaches to language teaching, provides a superficial and unbalanced image of the target culture and is probably rejected very rapidly by learners who subsequently see the language and its culture as irrelevant to them. Understanding does not involve piecemeal adulation but systematic, balanced, comprehensive and coherent knowledge of the culture in both its good and bad features and integrated with the language which marks it out and carries it on to successive generations.

II.4 Cross-Cultural Attitudes

The preceding discussion on cultural understanding also implies certain attitudes towards the other culture and its people. One of the more important goals of language teaching is the creation in the students of favourable cross-cultural attitudes and attitudes and expectations that enable them to move in other cultures and interact with other people without unwittingly causing or experiencing offence. For this reason, it is essential that language teachers both represent attitudes that are non-racist, unbiased and open to other cultures and that they be able to so structure their teaching that they develop in their students cross-cultural attitudes that are favourable to the target culture and peoples, that generalise to all other cultures, and that enable their students, like themselves, to move in other cultures and interact with other people without offence.

The Council of Europe, in Recommendation No R(84) of the Committee of Ministers to member States stated in relation to the development of both cultural understanding and cross-cultural attitudes in teachers that they should be trained in such a way as to:

> become aware of the various forms of cultural expression present in their own national cultures, and in [target cultures] ...;

> recognise that ethnocentric attitudes and stereotyping can damage individuals and, therefore, attempt to counteract their influence;
>
> realise that they too should become agents of a process of cultural exchange and develop and use strategies for approaching, understanding and giving due consideration to other cultures as well as educating their pupils to give due consideration to them; ...
>
> make teachers and pupils more receptive to different cultures ... (Rey, 1986: 50-51)

III ASSESSING SKILLS OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The corollary of specifying minimum skills for language teachers is the need to assess that language teachers and new recruits to the profession have those skills. As already noted, this should not be seen negatively or punitively but supportively so that any shortfall leads to a review of preservice and inservice education programs.

III.1 Specialist Language Teaching Competence

Preferably using criteria that can be established, practical teaching competence can be assessed by the teachers themselves using a self-assessment instrument, by their immediate specialist superiors or other persons charged with supervising the minimum skills requirements, or by their students. The availability of self-assessment instruments is desirable if teachers are to be encouraged to take some responsibility for their own ongoing professional development but, if the minimum requirements are to be enforced or decisions made in relation to resource allocation for inservice education, others (e.g. professional superiors or some agency) should be charged with responsibility for assessing whether the minimum skills requirements have been attained.

In addition and for reasons already referred to, it is desirable to consider the nature of the preservice and inservice training programs that the teachers may have undertaken. They should contain at least those features indicated earlier leading the teachers to a rational understanding of the principles of their field and producing the ability to apply those principles to the solution of practical language teaching 'problems'. It is clearly necessary for language teachers to have had specialist training, for formal training in methodology to be included in their preservice training

programs, and for them to have the opportunity to undertake graduate and more specialist studies in applied linguistics. Training programs that fail to produce the ability to generalise about language teaching, to be reflective on their teaching experiences, and to rationally respond to language teaching situations rather than mechanically apply predetermined formulae, are clearly inadequate. On the basis of what was proposed earlier, training programs that do not have at least 120 hours of specialist training in methodology together with teaching practice and some introduction to the linguistic sciences would have to be considered inadequate but many teachers (especially those in promotional positions such as Heads of Departments or Regional Coordinators) require specialist graduate courses at the graduate diploma or Masters level.

III.2 Language Proficiency

Language proficiency is best assessed using techniques of direct proficiency assessment, i.e. by matching learners' language behaviour against a proficiency scale in which language behaviour is described at intervals from zero to native-like terms of observable behaviour; in the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR) (Ingram & Wylie, 1979/1985), this behaviour is described in terms of the tasks learners can carry out and how they are carried out (for further discussion on the various forms of language tests and their respective uses, see Ingram, 1985).

The principal Australian scale for the assessment of second language proficiency is the ASLPR. The ASLPR was originally released for use in January 1979 but has been reviewed and subjected to ongoing research and development continuously since then. It is not only used Australia-wide with many languages but is also used overseas and the principal American scale, the ACTFL Guidelines, makes extensive (though unacknowledged) use of its descriptors. The ASLPR provides a description of the way language behaviour develops from zero to native-like by describing observable language behaviour in each of the four macroskills of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing at nine point along the proficiency development continuum: 0, 0+, 1-, 1, 1+, 2, 3, 4, 5. An additional three levels are available for use at 2+, 3+ and 4+. Proficiency assessment using the ASLPR is administered in a face-to-face interview in which the interviewer elicits maximum language behaviour in Speaking, Listening, and Reading in order to observe and rate it in comparison with the scale descriptions. Writing is rated similarly but the writing behaviour is usually elicited in a pencil-and-paper test which may

be administered in a group or individually. The outcome of the assessment is a profile giving the learner's proficiency in each of the four macroskills of Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading. This contrasts with more traditional tests that conflate language proficiency scores into a single figure: such an approach is necessarily invalid or at best meaningless since it is common to find learners with different proficiency levels in the different macroskills.

The starting-point in the development of the ASLPR was the FSI Scale though the two instruments now differ substantially in descriptors and certain theoretical and practical aspects (see Ingram, 1979/1984). It was initially developed for use in assessing proficiency in English as a Second Language (ESL) in the Adult Migrant Education Program though there is no reason to assume that it is any less effective with other languages than is the FSI Scale from which it was initially derived and which is mostly used to assess proficiency in languages other than English. However, since the ASLPR was first released, it was formally trialled in 1982 for use with adolescent ESL learners; at the same time in 1982, it was reviewed and amended for use with adolescent and adult learners of languages other than English as foreign languages, as a result of which exemplars were produced in French, Italian and Japanese. In September 1991, work commenced on producing a version for use in assessing proficiency in Chinese as a foreign language, funding has been approved for production of a version for use with Indonesian as a foreign language, and, following an international workshop on the assessment of proficiency in Japanese sponsored by the Asian Studies Council in 1990, funds are being allocated to review the ASLPR for Japanese with a revised and improved version expected to be released by the end of 1992. In addition, a project is due for completion in 1992 in which direct proficiency assessment principles are being applied to the assessment of special purpose proficiency with exemplars of the ASLPR being produced for use with English for Business Purposes, English for Engineering Purposes, and English for Academic Purposes. The ASLPR is also available in a self-assessment version which is particularly valuable for teachers who are able to assess their own language skills and determine remedial activities by which to improve their proficiency levels. The ASLPR for Self-Assessment has also proved immensely valuable in large scale proficiency assessment where it is not economically possible to interview all possible candidates: thus it was used to estimate the level of proficiency of Queensland language teachers in 1990 as a basis for estimating the extent of the language upgrading needs of Queensland language teachers. In other words, the ASLPR has been widely accepted for use in assessing the

proficiency of second and foreign language learners of English and other languages, it has been extensively researched, and there is ongoing review and development going on continuously in the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages at Griffith University and its associated specialist testing centre, the Language Testing and Curriculum Centre of the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia.

With many tests, validity and reliability depend on the quality of the statistical analysis that has gone on in the test validation process. With a direct instrument such as the ASLPR, the FSI Scale, the ACTFL Guidelines or the Speaking test of the IELTS, validity and reliability (once the scale has been validated) depend heavily on the quality of the training that interviewers and raters have received. If the ASLPR is to be used for the assessment of the proficiency of language teachers, then it is essential that the persons administering it, conducting the interviews, and rating the teachers be properly trained. The authors of the ASLPR provide regularly three-day seminars at the introductory and advanced levels in the use of the ASLPR, and a refresher course is also available. Formal accreditation as ASLPR assessors is also available for experienced users of the ASLPR who are able to demonstrate in an examination a high degree of accuracy in their rating and a high level of skill in interviewing.

When the ASLPR is being used to assess teacher proficiency, it is essential that only trained interviewers and raters be used. In addition, however, it should be noted that, for significant theoretical reasons, a standardised interview kit is not provided. However, teacher assessment might be facilitated if a large interview kit were provided to teacher assessors so as to ensure that they were using appropriate materials and to assist with their ongoing assessment load. However, the kit would have to be large enough that the interviewer could vary considerably the actual items used and ensure that security was not breached with teachers 'boning up' on items so as to produce rote-memorised answers to prompts. As valuable as such an interview kit would be, some sample videotapes of learners at 2+, 3 and 3+ which interviewers and raters could view at regular intervals so as to double-check the validity of their ratings would be essential.

III.3 Cultural Knowledge and Cross-Cultural Attitudes

As already indicated, both cultural knowledge and the development of favourable cross-cultural attitudes are important considerations for language teachers and the means are available to assess both of them. It is not recommended, however, that they be included as discrete items for

assessment in the context of specifying and assessing teacher skills. First, cultural knowledge should, as already indicated, be considered an integral part of language learning and an integral part of the attainment of proficiency in the language. Attempts to assess it discretely and separately from language proficiency are likely to promote the rote-learning of factual information that has little if anything to do with either proficiency development or the development of an understanding of the other people. Second, though the development of favourable cross-cultural attitudes is an important goal in language teaching and essential for language teachers, attitude measurement is notoriously difficult and unreliable and is better considered as part of training programs or during long-term observation of the teacher in work conditions.

IV SOME IMPLICATIONS OF SPECIFYING AND ASSESSING LANGUAGE TEACHER SKILLS

It has already been emphasised that the process of specifying and assessing teacher skills should be seen supportively rather than negatively or punitively. There are a number of implications that flow from the specification and assessment of language teacher skills.

1. Registration authorities must agree on the desirable minimum skill levels to be specified and agree to identify language teachers in a specific category different from generalist teachers with whom many registration authorities have previously grouped them.

2. Teachers already employed whose skills fall below the minimum skills specified need to be assisted to attain and maintain the professional and linguistic skills required: this requires inservice training seminars, steps to encourage professional self-development, and encouragement to language teachers to spend time regularly in the country of origin of their target language through scholarships, exchanges and taxation concessions for professional development.

3. Universities providing preservice education for teachers must radically rethink all aspects of their training programs to ensure that their students leave their degree and diploma programs with the specified minimum proficiency levels, the necessary training in applied linguistics, and the required practical teaching skills. So far as proficiency is concerned, this will require radical change to degree programs and teaching methodology to increase the amount of time spent in language study, to develop proficiency through communication-oriented courses, and to encourage

maximum use of out-of-class learning modes including self-access facilities, community interaction, and time abroad. Not least, language courses must, whatever else they might also aspire to do, seek to develop and assess the students' proficiency in the target language. In turn, this will require the retraining of university language staff and the rethinking of their language programs.

4. For teachers, the implications are that they must recognise and accept their level of teaching skills and proficiency, not as a source of a sense of inferiority or professional worthlessness but as the starting point from which to increase their professional competence. It is not unreasonable for teachers to expect assistance in this from their employers but, as professionals, it is also their responsibility to accept an obligation to self-develop by seeking graduate studies in their language and in applied linguistics and by undertaking those formal and informal activities that will increase their language proficiency. In this, the professional associations, the Modern Language Teachers Associations, have a significant role to play in stimulating self-development and in providing a context in which teachers can give and receive mutual support.

5. Though the notion of specifying and assessing teacher skills (especially language proficiency) is to be strongly supported, one must be careful not to set unrealistic dates by which teachers should have attained the minimum proficiency levels. Self-assessment surveys of Queensland teachers conducted by the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages at Griffith University in late 1990 indicated that most Queensland language teachers were between 1+ and 2+ on the ASLPR with the majority around 1+ but many below this level as well. It has to be recognised that proficiency development is slow and it is not realistic to set target dates that are too short. In addition, however generously teacher upgrading programs might be funded, it is not realistic to expect that they can be so liberally funded as to enable all teachers to raise their proficiency levels to ASLPR 3 within a period of a few years. Rather, the need is for inservice programs that provide teachers with a 'kick start' and then encourage their self development over several years. A realistic target date by which to have all Queensland teachers, for example, at ASLPR level 3 would be the year 2000.

6. If teachers are to be encouraged to self-develop and, in particular, to make the very considerable efforts needed if they are all to attain ASLPR 3 by the year 2000, then relevant incentives should be provided. The recent emphasis on productivity in workplace reform and the new category of

Advanced Skills Teachers suggest financial incentives that may be appropriate but the provision of a career path for language teachers as recommended in the advice provided on the Queensland language education policy is also relevant (Ingram & John, 1990: 67-68).

7. There are also implications for the ASLPR. All teachers need to develop an understanding of the ASLPR and of what the levels mean. Regional coordinators or other senior persons who may be responsible for assessing teacher proficiency need to develop skills in validly and reliably rating teachers using the ASLPR, i.e. they need both introductory and advanced training programs. It may be useful, as already indicated, for interview kits at Level 3 in the various priority languages to be developed and regularly regenerated (for security purposes) and to be available to teacher assessors. Also as already indicated, exemplar interviews in priority languages but particularly in ESL as the common language might be developed and made available to teachers and teacher assessors so as to provide reference points for interpretation of the scale descriptors. There would also be value in having additional foreign language exemplars produced to add to those currently or shortly available in French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian. In Queensland, the only priority language omitted at present is German and it may be useful for a German version to be developed as a priority project. Exemplars in other national priority language could also be developed.

V OTHER RELATED ISSUES

In addition to the general issues involved in specifying and assessing language teacher skills, there are a number of related issues that warrant brief consideration.

1. The professional associations at the local, State and national levels have a major role to play in assisting in teacher upgrading. It is essential that they be involved in establishing the process of specifying and assessing language teacher skills and in the provision of upgrading programs. Ultimately, if the quality of language teaching is to be raised to the necessary level, the responsibility will lie with teachers and their professional association to see that it happens since, realistically, it is inconceivable that any government will be able to provide the enormous sums required to raise the competence of all teachers to the desired minimum levels within a reasonable time: the backlog created by decades of neglect is simply too great. Provided that they have some financial assistance, the MLTAs and the AFMLTA can contribute much to the

process of teacher upgrading, not least by encouraging attitudes amongst teachers conducive to professional self-reliance and self-development. The recent formation by the AFMLTA of Special Interest Groups in teacher education and in primary school language teaching is significant in this regard.

2. It is unlikely, following the decades of neglect and the small numbers of students still graduating from secondary schools and entering university language programs, that sufficient teachers with sufficient skills will be forthcoming from the universities to staff the expanded language learning programs being sought in all States and nationally. Hence to meet the demands, it will be necessary to consider alternative strategies including the use of different teaching modes and the use of language teaching assistants, native speakers who work under the supervision of trained teachers. However, if language teaching assistants are not to remain inferior, they must be given the opportunity to develop proper teaching skills and qualifications. In the advice provided on the Queensland language education policy, Ingram and John recommended the use of carefully selected language teaching assistants who would be given some short initial training, they would then work under the supervision of trained teachers and be offered on-the-job and withdrawal training prepared in conjunction with local universities so that eventually they would pass through certificate and diploma levels (and beyond) and have the opportunity of becoming fully registrable teachers.

3. If the expanded language teaching programs are to be staffed, granted the shortage of teachers for the reasons outlined above, those teachers who are available must be fully utilised and hence allowed to specialise in language teaching. In order to staff the expansion of language teaching into primary schools, it is essential that teachers be capable of teaching at all levels even though, as in most professional fields, some teachers may prefer to specialise at certain levels. This means the time when one could train as a secondary school language teacher only must be seen as past and training programs must seek to provide training for all school levels. Though this implies a major change of attitude amongst teachers and a reformation of training programs, it is a step that many teachers involved in primary-secondary school clusters have already taken and, without it, it is impossible to see how the anticipated expansion in language teaching programs could be staffed.

4. In order to cater for the range of languages (including those not identified as priority languages), to enable students anywhere in the country to learn

a language, to help to overcome the shortage of teachers, and to enhance the proficiency levels attained by students, it is essential to encourage much more diversity in the modes by which languages are learned. In addition to regular class teaching, therefore, it is to be expected in the future that more use will be made of distance learning, teleconferencing, self-access, bilingual and immersion models, and other modes. The corollaries of these developments include the need for language teachers to be trained to cope with the additional modes (i.e. minimum professional skills will have to include capability in these other modes) and other teachers will need to have the ability to support children in their classes who are learning language by one of these modes. In other words, it is essential that all teachers (particularly all primary school teachers) have some introduction to how to teach another language, at least to the extent that they can support their children's language learning. This is not, in fact, a radically new suggestion since, for at least the last two decades and most recently in the Federal Government's White Paper on language policy (DEET, 1991: 57), there have been calls for all teachers to receive basic training in the teaching of English as a Second language as an essential step towards enabling them to cater more effectively for the Non-English Speaking Background children in their classes.

VI CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to consider what is entailed in specifying and assessing minimum skills for language teachers. The opportunities for language teaching and for language teachers have not been more promising for many years but they will not be grasped unless the quality of the language programs is high and unless the language teachers are thoroughly professional, competent and proficient. It is essential, however, if language teachers who, it is evident from AFMLTA policy, are already conscious of their needs, are to cooperate in the face of the threat that assessment of their skills might seem to make, that the process be seen and portrayed as supportive of them and not threatening. Realistic goals must be set in terms of the skills language teachers need and the time required to attain those minimum skill levels, suitable upgrading programs must be provided, preservice programs must be revised to ensure that new recruits to language teaching have the prerequisite skills, and teacher self-development must be encouraged. The opportunities for language teaching and for language teachers have never been greater and the realisation of the importance of language skills to the society has never been more acute: language teachers will be able to respond to those opportunities and meet the society's needs only if their professional skills are substantially increased.

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LOTE MINIMUM SKILLS 'PACKAGE'

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this paper a series of discussion points are provided with regard to the concept of a minimum skills package for teachers of Languages other than English in Queensland schools. The paper is written in the context of the Minister's policy statement (Braddy, 1991) and the Ingram and John report on *The Teaching of Languages and Cultures in Queensland* (Ingram & John, 1990).

The paper addressed possible ways of developing the content for such a package. It does not address the application and use of the package.

The philosophy behind the minimum skills package presented here is one of renewal. LOTE teacher skills are a valuable resource which will underpin the successful implementation of the Queensland LOTE Policy (Braddy, 1991). The concept of renewal involves the evaluation of teacher skills in order that the most effective teaching programs may be provided in Queensland schools. Underpinning the concept of renewal are professional development activities effectively targeted to need. A minimum skills package is a link in the ongoing cycle of renewal which is underway in LOTE in Queensland.

Along with the renewal of existing teacher skills, such a minimal skills package can be important in assessing the skills of those seeking to enter language teaching in Queensland. These would include Queensland graduates and those from other States and other countries.

1.1 Current Initiatives in Assessment

A component of the minimum skills package will need to address foreign language skills. In the last decade there has been considerable interest in the assessment of language, both in learner achievement in language courses and in their general proficiency. For example, in schools, the ALL (Australian Language Levels) Project and subsequent related language-specific curriculum projects, and NAFLaSSL (the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level) have

been describing achievement at points through and at the end of language courses. Elsewhere, proficiency tests are being developed for overseas trained teachers and English for specific purposes, and proficiency scales for adults and adolescents in Japanese and other Asian languages. (See *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy*, 1991, 75.)

Issues concerning the assessment of language teachers' skills in Queensland, including language proficiency, are addressed in depth in this paper.

A telephone survey was conducted across State Education Departments. No Education Department except Victoria assesses LOTE teacher skills - neither proficiency nor language teaching skills. (Victoria's assessment for primary teachers only consists of a written test of 250 words, a reading test and a conversation in the target language.) Officers contacted agreed that there is a need for such procedures but are aware of the complexity of the issue and are wary about tackling it[1]. All States expressed interest in the outcome of this project.

In general, and in principle, LOTE teachers (primary and secondary) employed in State Education Departments are expected to have a degree with a language major, or to have a three-year tertiary qualification in the target language. In some States primary teachers are expected to have at least a two-year tertiary language qualification. All States indicated, however, that the reality is sometimes/often different; since teacher supply is low, teachers are often recruited without full qualifications.

2.0 SETTING THE SCENE FOR LOTE EDUCATION

A minimum skills package for LOTE teaching is best discussed within a conceptual framework which can provide a set of common understandings about goals of language teaching, principles of language learning and teaching, and skills areas for LOTE teachers. In this paper, sets of assumptions about goals, principles and teaching skills are outlined. If these assumptions are broadly agreed to by conference participants, they will provide a springboard for discussion of the complex issues underlying the idea of a minimum skills package for LOTE teachers.

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[1] A suggestion was made that Queensland take the issue to a national forum, perhaps through funding from DEET, since all Departments are facing similar issues.

discussion of the complex issues underlying the idea of a minimum skills package for LOTE teachers.

2.1 Goals for Language Teaching

Languages are taught and learned for intellectual, cultural and economic reasons (Braddy, 1991). Rivers (1983, 38) surveyed teachers internationally on their views of the objectives of LOTE education and found:

> The realities, as opposed to the predictions, showed that most teachers, no matter what their approach, had realised that language learning needed to be related in some way to the career plans of their students. They also felt the need in the contemporary world for oral communication and for understanding the values and viewpoints of the speakers of other languages. They recognised the importance of understanding how language works. That they viewed their work as part of a general educational enterprise is shown by the high ranking of such objectives as intellectual development, broadening the education experience of the students by introducing them to another mode of learning, and nourishing personal culture through acquaintance with literary works.

Rivers reported that teachers in Australia and New Zealand emphasised:

> the need to see the world from different perpectives and experience what it is like to belong to another linguistic group. They strongly emphasised oral communication, cultural understanding and the need to combat ethnocentric attitudes.

2.2 Language Learning and Teaching

The principles of language learning and teaching in the Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines (Scarino et al., 1988) provide a possible set of assumptions about language teaching and learning for the purposes of this forum. The principles come from current thinking in the field. They have widespread acceptance at present (Francis, 1989) but we recognise that as more research results come to hand about language and language learning these will be fine-tuned or modified over time.

Learners learn a language best when:

1. they are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests

2. they are provided with opportunities to participate in communicative use of the target language in a wide range of activities

3. they are exposed to communicative data which is comprehensible and relevant to their own needs and interests

4. they focus deliberately on various language forms, skills, and strategies in order to support the process of language acquisition

5. they are exposed to sociocultural data and direct experience of the culture(s) embedded within the target language

6. they become aware of the role and nature of language and of culture

7. they are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress

8. they are provided with opportunities to manage their own learning (Scarine et al., 1988, Book 1, 17)

The principles of language learning and teaching in the Queensland Education Department LOTE Draft Syllabus (1989) have been derived from this set of principles.

The 'communicative approach' to language teaching has been broadly accepted in LOTE teaching for the past two decades since the move away from the grammar translation and audio-lingual approaches. Since the term 'the communicative approach' is interpreted in a range of different ways, its use without definition can cause misunderstandings. The above set of principles incorporates the major tenets of the communicative approach. These emphasise the communicative competence goal of language learning, and processes of communication, such as using language appropriately in different types of situations, using language to perform different kinds of tasks, e.g. to solve puzzles, to get information, and using language for social interaction with other people (Richards et al., 1985, 48).

Assumptions about the principles behind the teaching and learning of LOTE will fundamentally influence the direction of a discussion on a minimum skills package for LOTE teachers.

2.3 LOTE Teacher Skills Areas

A set of assumptions about LOTE teacher skills areas also needs to be developed before effective discussion on a minimum skills package can take place. Based on the above goals and principles, which reflect current thinking in second language education, the following assumptions about optimal LOTE teaching skills areas might be appropriate.

LOTE teachers are at their most effective if they have:

- core teaching skills
- language teaching skills
- cultural awareness and experience
- interpersonal skills
- target language proficiency.

Each is outlined briefly below. The skills areas are not dealt with in any order of importance.

- **Core Teaching Skills**

  LOTE teachers are likely to be most effective when they are skilled classroom teachers, able to manage a learner centred program of teaching which incorporates aspects of good educational practice, appropriate to the age group of learners. LOTE teachers will be most effective when they are trained and skilled in the teaching of the age group, i.e. in primary or secondary methodology. Research into characteristics of effective teachers and now into effective teaching behaviours, has looked at factors such as conditions (the effect of learner, task and environmental factors on teacher decision-making), teacher characteristics, cognitive style and planning style, cognitive processes, planning, teaching routines and self-evaluation (Shavelston & Stern in Nunan, 1989, 20). Blum (1984) summarises effective classroom practices as follows:

  1. Instruction is guided by a preplanned curriculum.

2. There are high expectations for student learning.
3. Students are carefully oriented to lessons.
4. Instruction is clear and focused.
5. *Learning progress is monitored closely.*
6. When students don't understand, they are retaught.
7. Class time is used for learning.
8. There are smooth and efficient classroom routines.
9. Instructional groups formed in the classroom fit instructional needs.
10. Standards for classroom behaviour are high.
11. Personal interactions between teachers and students are positive.
12. Incentives and rewards for students are used to promote excellence. (Blum in Richards & Nunan, 1990, 10)

Core teaching skills incorporate the intangible factors of effective teaching:

> Teaching is an art. As an art, much of it is idiosyncratic, a personal achievement of the teacher. A capable teacher can take the dullest material and give it life, and an incapable teacher can denude the finest material of all interest. (McArthur, 1983, 82)

- **Language Teaching Skills**

LOTE teachers are likely to be most effective when they are versed in current approaches to first (for background speakers) and second language teaching. Approaches to language teaching are currently strongly informed by psycholinguistics (both first and second language acquisition), by theories of instructed second language acquisition (e.g. Ellis, 1990) and by classroom oriented research. In this context, aspects of second language teaching which are considered central include:

Teacher behaviours

> amount and type of teacher talk (how much teacher talk? which language? modification of teacher talk)

teacher questions (types of questions; questioning patterns; wait time; distribution of questions; display and referential questions)

feedback (types of feedback; error correction; focus on form (Nunan, 1991, in press)

In addition, the *ALL Guidelines* emphasise the need for LOTE teachers to possess good curricular skills. Curricular skills include abilities in planning, in teaching strategies (based on clear principles of learning), selection and use of resources, assessment and evaluation. Action research skills will heighten the effectiveness of teaching.

Learner behaviours

LOTE teachers are likely to be most effective when they can encourage behaviours and responses in their learners which allow for purposeful and active use of the target language, for positive attitudes to the language and culture, and for the development of a responsibility for learning. Learners are effective learners, according to Rubin, if they have the following characteristics:

1. the good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser;
2. the good language learner has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from communication. He is willing to do many things to get his message across;
3. the good language learner is often not inhibited. He is willing to appear foolish if reasonable communication results. He is willing to live with a certain amount of vagueness;
4. in addition to focusing on communication, the good language learner is prepared to attend to 'form'. The good language learner is constantly looking for patterns in the language.
5. the good language learner practises;
6. the good language learner monitors his own speech and the speech of others. That is, he is constantly attending to how well his speech is being received and whether his performance meets the standards he has learned;

7. **the good language learner attends to meaning. He knows that in order to understand the message, it is not sufficient to pay attention to the grammar of the language or to the surface form of speech.**
(adapted from Rubin by Naiman et al., 1978)

The nexus between core teaching skills and language teaching skills becomes increasingly merged as language teaching skills are explored.

- **Cultural Awareness and Experience**

LOTE teachers will be most effective when they are familiar with, and have direct experience of the target language culture(s). With strong knowledge and experience in the target language culture, teachers are able to encourage positive and exploratory attitudes to the target culture, to pass on knowledge and understandings about the target culture, and to promote possibilities for direct experiences of the culture within and outside the classroom.

This skill area might be broken down into the following aspects:

* awareness of and broad knowledge about the foreign culture
* command of the etiquette of the culture
* understanding the similarities and main differences between the target culture and other cultures
* understanding of the values of the target culture
* understanding of the implications of ethnocentricity and stereotyping.

- **Interpersonal Skills**

Interpersonal skills are important not only in the classroom but also within the school and the wider community. At this point in the LOTE initiative, its success will depend on LOTE teachers' capacity to:

* represent the value of language learning to other staff members, parents and sceptics

- liaise with class teachers to plan LOTE and cultural activities which integrate with other aspects of the curriculum
- be flexible and adaptable to varying needs and requirements of particular schools and classes.

- **Proficiency in the Target Language**

  LOTE teachers will be most effective when they are proficient in the target language to a level which enables them to promote purposeful and active language use in the classroom, to interact with native speakers they encounter in the course of their teaching-related activities, and through this proficiency to allow them credibility amongst learners, parents and the teaching community.

  Goals for language teaching are becoming more clearly specified. We know a good deal more about the skills and understandings that LOTE teachers need and a good deal more now about effective approaches to language teaching than we did, although more research is needed. These considerations provide the context for investigating the assessment of skills areas.

3.0 ISSUES IN ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AREAS

Each of the separate skills areas -

- core teaching skills
- language teaching skills
- cultural awareness and experience
- interpersonal skills
- proficiency in the target language

raises a number of issues with regard to assessment. Assessment of language proficiency is the one which gains the most public attention and is the focus of debate. We want to argue that the other areas are just as important.

Because of the complexity of the proficiency issue, it is dealt with in Appendix 1, although we draw out the main points below.

Clearly some overall judgment across the above skills areas will need to be made. As with all assessment, it is worth remarking that this involves matters of judgment and not numerical scores.

3.1 Assessing Language Teaching Skills (Core Skills and Language Teaching Skills Combined)

Language teaching skills are those skills which put into practice the assumptions about language teaching and learning reflecting a communicative approach discussed above.

Core teaching and language teaching skills have so far been treated separately. In effect, core teaching skills and language teaching skills are integrally related. If core skills are weak, teachers are likely to experience a corresponding weakness in their LOTE teaching skills. For this reason, it is suggested that the two skills areas be combined for the purposes of possible assessment in the LOTE package, but that the area of assessment be labelled language teaching skills. The recognition of primary core skills and secondary core skills will need to remain in any consideration of language teaching skills.

There are three issues which need discussion with regard to the assessment of language teaching skills: the criteria, the standards expected and the process.

Criteria

Many sets of criteria have been developed in other countries for assessing language teaching skills, for example, the RSA (Royal Society of Arts), and ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). Features of teaching which are assessed include skills of organisation, management and technique.

The Queensland teacher training institutions also have criteria currently in use and from these criteria acceptable criteria could be derived. The extent to which the criteria should differ, depending on whether primary/secondary/distance needs to be decided.

One way of proceeding to develop a set of criteria would be to examine and develop ones suitable for Queensland. For our purposes, the criteria should relate to the assumptions about the goals of language teaching, the principles of language learning and teaching and teacher skills areas.

Standards

The same problems that beset all qualitative and verbal assessments will be apparent in assessing teacher skills. It will be necessary to agree upon and then spell out as clearly as possible what constitutes a minimum threshold of skill. Those actually doing the practical assessments will need to be in agreement on this and be able to recognise the minimum standard. (A situation not unlike that at Years 11 and 12 when assessors, i.e. teachers, have to know the cut-off points between VHA/HA/Sound/Limited achievement.) For example, the RSA Practical Assessment Form for teaching English as a Second Language allows for comments about strengths and weaknesses, then an up-to-standard/not-up-to-standard assessment in three sections. The assessment allows for a balanced overview of skills taken holistically and evidence for decisions reached.

Process

The only valid way to assess teachers in action is to see them in action. Diaries, lessons, plans, reporting back by teachers do not capture the chemistry of what actually happens.

New teachers may accept the intrusion of an assessor or observer in their classrooms, but continuing teachers will undoubtedly find this threatening. There are, however, approaches that can be taken to mitigate this.

- In line with the philosophy presented in this paper as one of renewal, the assessments should be linked to professional development. Practical assessments should be something done with not to teachers.

- Teachers should have a chance to have their say and contribute their self assessments to the assessment.

- The criteria for assessment should include not only specifications of observable classroom behaviour but also specifications of teachers' skills in self-enquiry, critical thinking and evaluation. This allows for a 'professional development' approach as opposed to a 'teacher training' one (Richards & Nunn, 1990, xii) and allows teachers more scope to show their range of abilities.

- A discussion before and after lesson observation will allow teachers to give the rationale of what they planned and the opportunity to show their level of awareness of what actually happens in their classrooms, to reflect on and evaluate the learning process and to suggest alternative courses of action or ways of solving problems.

For beginning teachers who are coming to terms with how to put theory into practice and with their own personal philosophies and values, it could be seen to be harsh that they are expected to be as advanced in language teaching skills as experienced teachers. The ability to be reflective and be able to evaluate one's performance could be of equal (if not more) importance.

Whichever way the practical skills are assessed, it is important that the criteria and standards do cover the 'core' teaching skills: such things as unit planning, lesson design, behaviour management, catering to needs (levels, interests, learning styles, etc.), varied strategies (e.g. cooperative learning), assessment and evaluation should be incorporated into language teaching assessment. (See the *P-10 Language Education Framework*, 1989.)

Much has been done in the area of assessing practical language teaching skills. The task will be to develop criteria, standards and processes appropriate to Queensland and to have these fully consulted among teachers.

3.2 Assessing Cultural Awareness and Experience

The extent of contact with the target culture and the teacher's depth of understanding of the above five areas could be ascertained in an interview with a native speaker, ideally at the same time as the language proficiency assessment.

3.3 Assessing Interpersonal Skills

The importance of interpersonal skills in the classroom, the school and the wider community, has already been indicated. While it is probably not appropriate nor practical to assess these skills, they should be included as an essential feature of professional development activities.

3.4 Assessing Target Language Proficiency

To test teachers' ability to use the target language for real communicative purposes, it has been suggested that the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ALSPR) be used (Ingram & John, 1990, Recommendation 74). This scale describes the development of English as a second language from zero to native-like proficiency in nine levels across the four macroskills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. A sample is included in Appendix 2.

A scale of this kind allows for a descriptive assessment of someone's use of language and is preferable to one that tests knowledge about language, giving a raw, numerical score.

There are obvious advantages in using a scale that appears to be measuring what it is supposed to measure and describing what people can do, rather than what they know.

The notion of proficiency and the use of scales such as the ASLPR is controversial. However, because of the complex nature of language and the difficulties in measuring it, no test devised to date is in all aspects perfect.

The description of language development in the ASLPR refer to English and the tasks are derived from second language context[1]. Therefore, ASLPR in this English version is not appropriate. It would be preferable to have specific foreign language versions[2]. The suggested tasks will also need to be modified to take into account the foreign language context and to be more culturally appropriate.

The assessment of teachers' proficiency will be a somewhat contentious issue. The decision to use the ASLPR, or any other kind of rating scale, must be preceded by full discussion and an open appraisal of all the issues. These issues are outlined in more detail in Appendix 1 where the notion of proficiency, the use of rating scales and recommendations from LOTE coordinators, consultants and teachers are included.

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[1] i.e. where English is the language of the wider community.

[2] The foreign language versions were begun about 10 years ago.

In this use of ASLPR, some of the main issues appear to be:

1. The role of ASLPR in establishing a benchmark for minimum proficiency.

2. The suitability of the ASLPR as it stands for foreign languages and the suggestion it be converted to other languages.

3. The extent to which the tasks need to reflect:

   (a) a foreign or second language perspective (or both)

   (b) general or specific language teaching proficiency (or both).

4. The value of using the self-assessment version of the scale and the desirability of having these available in specific languages.

It will be possible to develop ways of assessing language teaching skills, cultural knowledge and target language proficiency. It is clear that new ways of assessment will have to be developed for the Queensland situation and consulted here. These may provide some ways of looking forward for other States who are also interested in this matter.

4.0 AN INTERPLAY OF THE SKILLS AREAS IN EFFECTIVE LOTE TEACHING

These four skills areas for LOTE teachers - language teaching skills, cultural awareness and experience, interpersonal skills, and target language proficiency - will contribute to effective LOTE teaching in complex and varying relationships. There may be some compensations for strengths and weaknesses. This is a desirable outcome and has implications for how final judgments will be made. One would think that flexible overall judgments would be possible.

4.1 The Influence of Program and Contextual Factors

Program and contextual factors may have an impact on the levels of skill required for effective LOTE teaching.

Primary LOTE Teaching

Ingram and John (1990) recommend that all LOTE teachers, regardless of whether they are primary or secondary, should have an ASLPR Level 3 (Ingram & John, 1990, 64). It is sometimes argued, however, that teachers at primary and junior secondary can have a lower level of proficiency.

Primary LOTE teaching will be most effective if the teacher is involved in ongoing management through the LOTE, in teacher talk in whole class activities, in responses to the child's actions as they participate in activities, in songs, poems, puppets, stories and games. Whereas secondary learners also benefit from such activities, secondary learners have more capacity to use conscious learning strategies such as perceiving patterns, making generalisations, and to supplement their learning in written and reading activities and in independent activities.

Pinthon (1979) outlines nine qualities of a good foreign language teacher of young children.

A good teacher

- has the managerial skills needed for keeping small groups working simultaneously, and the adaptability needed for regrouping children when appropriate;
- knows how to make constructive use of children's energy and curiosity, and is versatile enough to vary activities to fit children's interests and attention span;
- enjoys play-acting, has a flair for drama, miming, storytelling, or some talent for drawing, singing and/or playing a musical instrument;
- has imagination, resourcefulness, and the willingness to spend time selecting, adapting and devising materials;
- has a good sense of humour;
- is aware that there are differences between the children's language and the target language (and between the two cultures) which may cause learning difficulties;

- has a substantial repertoire of songs, stories and games (including those enjoyed by children in regions where the target language is spoken natively) and knows to select and/or adapt them for language learning;

- has an innate sense of communication, and knows how to simplify vocabulary and grammatical structures without distorting the target language;

- relates well to other adults in the learning environment.

(Pinthon, 1979, 75)

This list illustrates the importance of core primary teaching skills, together with the need for substantial proficiency and awareness of language for effective LOTE primary teaching. Primary teachers need as high a proficiency as secondary teachers.

It is essential that ample opportunity be provided for professional development to enable LOTE teachers of primary children to reach the desired levels of teaching skills and proficiency.

5.0 A PROFILE APPROACH TO RECORDING ASSESSMENT

The last few decades have witnessed a movement away from external, one-off examinations for certification to continuous curriculum-based assessments (as is done in Queensland) or a combination of both. At the same time, there has also been a move towards profiling as a way of reporting achievement in Australia and Queensland as well as in Europe and the United Kingdom (Broadfoot, 1986, 1987). For new teachers entering the service a skills package as above can provide the elements of a profile. For teachers already in the service an approach in which teachers can contribute their own assessments, which can aid in their professional development and which gives a rounded portrayal of their achievements and skills is preferable, not only on the grounds of social and professional justice but also because such an approach is more in tune with the current focus on teachers taking more responsibility for their professional growth (*Focus on Schools*, 1990, 39, 50, 102-104 and *Public Sector Management Standard for Performance Planning and Review*, PSMC, 1991, 5-7).

For continuing teachers, the assessments could be undertaken several times in conjunction with inservice and the involvement of peers in the assessment. After each set of tasks, formative profiles could be built up. The process could be undertaken up to three times, with a summative profile being prepared for

recommendation. An independent third party would probably, but not necessarily, have to be involved, particularly at the stage of drawing up the summative profile. However, the more the teachers' own self-assessments are drawn upon in the process, the more acceptable and powerful it will be as a mechanism for professional development and assessment.

Summarising the skills areas described to this point, a profile (for formative and summative purposes) could contain the following:

1. *Language Teaching Skills*
   - results on preservice courses
   - practical assessments
   - use of language for teaching
     - primary
     - secondary

2. *Cultural Awareness and Experience*
   - extent of target culture exposure
   - level of cultural sensitivity

3. *Language Proficiency*
   - LOTE proficiency results assessed by trained assessors using foreign language proficiency scales
     and
   - university results in language studies
     or
   - both, if applicable.

5.1 Profile Options

There are several ways that these profiles could be arrived at. Five such options, with their advantages and disadvantages are included in Appendix 4. The proficiency assessments would have to be done by a trained, accredited assessor and most likely not the same person doing the practical assessments and interviews.

There may be a two-tiered approach to these options. A teacher may have an initial language assessment, a practical observation and an interview with a report compiled. If criteria in all skill areas are fulfilled, then the report can be submitted to the assessment agency. However, if the completed report shows some areas are not at the required level, then

options 2-5 can be considered, and the report becomes the first formative record.

5.2 Same Assessment For All?

Decisions need to be made about the types of assessment needed for different groups of teachers. The package has to be flexible enough to cater for new teachers, continuing teachers, teachers coming to Queensland from interstate or overseas, teachers who are native speakers (both local and overseas), and language teaching *assistants*. As well, the extent to which the LOTE teacher assessment should (or even needs to) fit into existing departmental procedures needs to be considered.

6.0 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

If it is decided that only a test of language proficiency is required, the process of assessment and accreditation will be uncomplicated but not necessarily sound. However, if 2, 3 or 4 skills areas are to be assessed, and if these are to be done over several stages making use of formative and summative profiles, the process becomes increasingly complex.

The following will need to be addressed:

- the weightings given to each skill area;
- the form of recording each assessment will take, e.g. proficiency rating, pass/fail for teaching skills, verbal descriptions for cultural knowledge and interpersonal skills;
- the possibility or desirability of converting the above observations and measurements to a point scale;
- the process of converting information derived during the formative stage to a summative statement about performance;
- how the summative statement should be evaluated and a recommendation made.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on the above issues; specialist advice will be needed to resolve them.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This paper raises a number of important and complex issues related to the concept of a minimum skills package for teachers of languages in Queensland schools. A set of asumptions about language teaching and learning have been suggested, together with a set of skills areas for effective language teaching. The issues relating to assessment of these skills areas have been raised, and options have been presented. It can be argued that the assessment of LOTE teachers' skills, although a somewhat complex matter, would be, when tied to professional development initiatives, an integral part of the process of renewal in Queensland schools.

APPENDIX 1

ELABORATION OF ISSUES IN THE ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

METHODS OF LANGUAGE TESTING

Methods of language testing have changed over time and depend very much on how language is viewed. Translation was common up to the 1950s. The next few decades saw a rise in discrete point tests (usually in multiple choice format) to test knowledge about specific structures, vocabulary and phonology and reflected behaviourist psychology and a structuralist view of language both current at the time.

Other methods have tried an approach which recognises that language in real life is made up of various components and the skill of using language involves being able to piece components together or being able to understand them all at once. Translation, dictation and cloze tests take this integrative approach but the focus is still on testing knowledge about components of language. The results cannot indicate how well a person can use the language to communicate with someone else. Knowledge about the components of a language is not the same as proficiency in the language.

Since the goals of language teaching in Queensland include practical communicative skills in the language, assessment procedures need to direct focus on the users' proficiency as communicative tasks are performed. Indirect tests (such as those above) which focus on knowledge about language are not appropriate to assess a person's ability to use a language.

THE NOTION OF PROFICIENCY

There has been considerable confusion in the field around a number of key concepts relating to the nature of language, often coming in mutually exclusive pairs. So we have the following dichotomies:

langue/parole
performance/competence
use/usage
meaning/form
coherence/cohesion

acquisition/learning.

Each of these pairs tried to address in various ways the difference between being able to use a language and knowing about it.

Some writers use proficiency as in the same way as competency, yet others make a distinction between these two terms.

Two quotes at this point may help to clarify the term.

> 1. When we speak of proficiency, we are not referring to knowledge of a language, that is, to abstract, mental and unobservable abilities. We are referring to performance, or, that is, to observable or measurable behaviour ... Whereas competence refers to what we know about the rules of use and the rules of speaking of a language, proficiency refers to how well we can use such rules in communication.
>
> 2. Proficiency is defined with reference to specific situations, settings, purposes, settings and tasks.
>
> 3. Proficiency also implies the notion of a skill. It refers to the degree of skill with which a learner can perform a task.
>
> 4. Lastly, proficiency refers to the integration and application of a number of subskills in performing particular tasks.
>
> (Richards, 1985, 3-4)

> However, the concept of proficiency in a language seems, at least intuitively, to relate not only to a person's ability to carry out communication tasks but also to how he carries them out, i.e. to the linguistics forms through which those tasks are realised. One might, for example, communicate successfully in a shop (i.e. carry out a communication task) by pointing to the desired object and allowing the situation to sugest the meaning 'I want ...' or 'I want to buy ...' but this would not mean one had proficiency in the language. Thus proficiency needs to be defined in terms of not only the tasks that can be carried out but how they are carried out. This notion takes the definition of language proficiency beyond a task-oriented to a behavioural definition.
>
> (Ingram, 1985)

Several scales that describe language behaviour have been created to measure proficiency. One of the first was the Foreign Service Institute of America (or FSI) scales used to rate proficiency of foreign users since 1968. Others to appear

since then are the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR - developed in 1979/80) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Provisional Generic Descriptions issued in 1982, both of which are derived to some degree from the original FSI scale. These scales try to identify how a foreign or second language learners' language behaviour develops from zero to native-like proficiency. The ASLPR and ACTFL Guidelines contain descriptions at nine levels in the four macroskills.

Despite their widespread use, such rating scales to measure proficiency have come under criticism. The basis of much of this is the argument that centres on what actually constitutes proficiency. Ingram's ASLPR scales are based on the notion of 'General Proficiency' or the ability to use language in everyday non-specialist situations,

> ASLPR seek to measure the underlying general proficiency rather than the fulfilment of an absolutely specified task in an absolutely specified situation. (Ingram, 1984, 11)

This has been interpreted by some critics to mean that such scales are based on a single construct, a single psychological entity called general proficiency, an idea which has been hotly disputed (Nunan, 1987). The scales do, however, recognise the multidimensional nature of language and describe language behaviour in terms of syntax, fluency, morphology, vocabulary, prosody, discourse, social conventions. etc.

However, herein lies another argument about the validity of collapsing and mixing such a multiplicity of criteria into one level and giving it a name or number (see Appendix 2 for sample scale at Speaking 1+, Survival Proficiency). Ingram's position on this, in his introduction to the ASLPR, is:

> In the ASLPR, the definitions provide an overall picture of language behaviour at each level, and the learner is assigned to the one which his or her performance most closely resembles. This approach recognises that language is highly complex, that it may develop at slightly different rates in different directions and that, therefore, minor but compensating variations may occur within the total picture of the learner's behaviour.

Brindley (1986, 19) lists common criticisms by others of such scales as being general, impressionistic, subjective, relative in interpreration and therefore unreliable, with lack of precision in terms such as 'fluent', 'intelligible'. However, Ingram, in his introduction to the ASLPR, states:

> The global assessment of a learner's proficiency, which underlies the application of the ASLPR, may seem to make the assessment process more subjective, since the rater has essentially to use judgment in balancing different aspects of development against each other, but global assessment is necessitated by the sheer complexity of language and its development. Nevertheless even if the rating process has a subjective element, it is not impressionistic, and, in applying the ASLPR, the rater must refer to the scale and deliberately match the observed language behaviour with the scale descriptions; the rater must continually refer to the scale while rating a learner.

For all the unresolved issues, however, proficiency scales do offer a number of obvious advantages. Brindley (1986, 18) lists these as:

- they have high face validity, i.e. they look as if they are testing what they claim to test
- they represent an attempt to operationalise current thinking about the communicative use of language
- they are couched in terms of what people can do ... rather than what they know
- they provide a common language for teachers and others involved in second language education.

Brindley also strikes a note of caution (page 22) about viewing the descriptions as 'measurement':

> ... it must be emphasised that a general proficiency description cannot be regarded, nor should it be accepted, as a definitive 'scientific' measurement of any given individual's language behaviour. The fact is that we simply do not know enough about language to be that precise. Moreover, the more we find out, the more complex and variable an instrument language becomes. To say, therefore, that learner x has a proficiency level of y in skill z is to severely oversimplify the process of language learning and language use. While such an oversimplification may be necessary in some cases (such as standardising agreement on terms such as 'beginner', etc.) and sufficient in others (such as explaining a learner's proficiency in general terms to a member of the public), the concept of 'language proficiency level', as defined by proficiency scales, has to be considered in the light of all the obvious limitations on the validity and reliability of such tools. In the words of Vollmer, 1981:
>
> > We as a society on the whole simply cannot afford to classify people and divide them up (allocating

> educational and professional chances of different kinds) as long as the question of construct validity of the instruments used are not clarified somewhat further. This is especially true with the concept and measures of General Language Proficiency.

Vollmer's criticism above about validity of the instruments could be levelled equally at any test of language. The fact of the matter is that not enough is known about the true nature of language and its development; consequently no test to date is the definitive one. Hence we have to be practical and make the best, informed use of what is available, keeping in mind the purpose of the test (in our case to arrive at a description/measure of proficiency) and its limitations (i.e. as a global or gross assessment).

This position has some support. In discussing the use of verbal descriptions for determining standards and the problems with 'fuzzy standards', Sadler (1991, 12) states:

> When something is being assessed according to multiple criteria, it is often more feasible to operate with fuzzy composite standards (Sadler, 1983). The imprecision inherent in a verbal description enables a competent assessor to make mental compensations and trade-offs in order to allow for intercorrelations among the criteria and for the multiplier effect of some criteria on others. This is possible without the need to have exact measures, a mathematical formula (of weightings and a composition rule), and multiple cut-offs. Stated simply, the assessor's grading task is to find the class or grade description which best fits the object in question, in the knowledge that no description is likely to fit it perfectly (our underlining).

Another method of assessing language performance is illustrated in the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) examination in the Communicative Use of English as a Foreign Language. Tests are offered in three levels in the four macroskills. The levels are defined in terms of a set of performance criteria (see Appendix 3). The items are based on tasks required in everyday life, so appear to be assessing 'general proficiency'. These types of tests, also, have problems relating to the tasks chosen, and to the performance descriptions themselves which seem to have been derived from teachers' intuitive judgments (Brindley, 1989).

It appears, then, that any measure of proficiency and tests of communicative language use will have their critics.

ASSESSMENT OF LOTE PROFICIENCY

It has been suggested that the ASLPR be used as the mechanism for assessing the proficiency of individual LOTE teachers in Queensland and determining the benchmark or minimum standard of LOTE teaching. Despite the problems, its advantages (noted above) and the few viable alternatives available at present, mean that ASLPR must be seriously considered.

Due to the controversy about the notion of proficiency and the uses to which such scales should be put (e.g. for description rather than measurement, of proficiency) to use this as the sole measurement for fitness to teach could be open to challenge on many fronts. The scale should be used as an indication of general proficiency but should be considered along with other criteria before decisions are made.

At a three-day workshop, August 21-23rd 1991, some Queensland LOTE personnel undertook a workshop to become familiar with the ASLPR scale and its application. Several concerns and recommendations ensued, the main ones are as follows:

1. To have reliability, it is most important that independent, trained, native- or near-native speakers do the assessment in individual languages.

2. The scale we used was for English as a second language. Hence any descriptions of a syntactic or lexical nature refer to English (see Appendix and note references to conjunctions, tenses and question forms). It was felt that foreign language scales would have more face validity.

3. Foreign language versions were begun some years ago. If these individual language scales are to be developed further, it is not just a matter of translating all the language exponents from English. The particular developmental features of English may not necessarily hold for every language. For instance, at Speaking 1+ (see Appendix 2) speakers have mastered question forms in English which require complicated inversions and use of auxiliaries (e.g. *I went home → Where did you go?*). However, in Japanese a final 'ka' denotes a question and would probably be mastered 0+. It would be a major task to collect and document language features at all stages in each language, but unless this is done, the use of the scale will be seen as invalid. As well, the writing descriptions need to be modified to take account of other scripts.

4. If language samples or models at various levels are made available (particularly in speaking and writing) the task of assessment would be easier and more reliable. The self-assessment version of the scales could also be adapted to foreign languages.

5. In the scale, suggestions of tasks are given to elicit language output. These were not always seen by the workshop group to be appropriate. Several problems emerge:

   (a) The cultural appropriacy of some were questioned (e.g. writing a note to the milkman would not necessarily be useful to do in Indonesian).

   (b) The suggested tasks at some levels did not always appear to elicit language comparable in complexity or draw on similar lingustic resources (e.g. asking for the name of something appears at a different order of difficulty than explaining systems to a doctor).

   (c) There is no evidence in the descriptions of tasks that integration across the macroskills is desirable. Having been written nearly 12 years ago, they reflect the methodology and view of language appropriate at the time. Since then there has been more recognition of the dependence of the macroskills on one another, more emphasis in whole texts (or genres), a move towards task-based learning and research results which show problem-solving cooperative tasks generate more language than teacher-fronted questions. The tasks could be revised to reflect this.

   (d) The 'second language' nature of the tasks is obvious. There was considerable confusion among the LOTE group about these tasks. For example, writing a job application is clearly relevant in a second language situation, but could it be equally so in a foreign language? Perhaps the tasks should reflect more the uses to which foreign languages could be used here, e.g. writing to host school in foreign country to confirm details of forthcoming exchange. This led to a discussion on what we then expect our teachers to be able to do. Do we expect them to be familiar with and proficient in tasks required <u>in the target country</u> or with

those more relevant as a foreign language here. This, then has implications for what the teachers are able to teach. If they are not preparing students adequately for tasks in the target country, are they then not doing their job properly? This is an issue that requires more discussion and has direct bearing on the fundamental philosophy of our foreign language teaching.

(e) The interpretation of level 3, Minimum Vocational Proficiency (the recommended minimum level for LOTE teaching recommended by Ingram and John) posed problems. Some participants were unsure whether this meant language users were being assessed on their ability to discuss with educated native-speakers on teaching and education topics. This, then, raised other questions about the desirability or otherwise of having tasks specified that foreign language teachers should be able to do as teachers in classrooms (i.e. conduct games, give explanations, do literary criticism in foreign language). In other words, to what extent should foreign language teaching tasks be included in proficiency assessments of foreign language teachers? And should different tasks be expected of primary and secondary teachers? The scale as it is, is suitable for general, non-specific registers: if it is totally adapted for foreign language teachers the focus on general, everyday proficiency is lost. As well, the consequences for such an assessment might result in specific language courses being offered for foreign language teachers and this would be a negative outcome. If ability to use the language in the classroom for pedagogic purposes is to be a domain for assessment, it may be better assessed in action in the classroom as part of assessing language teaching skills, not as part of general proficiency.

APPENDIX 2

ASLPR SPEAKING 1+ SURVIVAL PROFICIENCY

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Able to satisfy all survival needs and limited social needs. Developing flexibility in a range of circumstances beyond immediate survival needs. Shows some spontaneity in language production but fluency is very uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation but has little understanding of the social conventions of conversation; grammatical errors still frequently cause misunderstanding. Limited vocabulary range necessitates much hesitation and circumlocution. The commoner tense forms occur but errors are frequent in formation and selection. Can use most question forms. While basic word order is established, errors still occur in more complex patterns. Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited by still tentative emergence of modification devices. Aware of basic cohesive features (e.g. pronouns, verb inflections), but many are unreliable, especially if less immediate in reference. Simple discourse markers are used relating to closely contiguous parts of the text but extended discourse is largely a series of discrete utterances. Articulation is reasonably comprehensible to native speakers, can combine most phonemes with reasonable comprehensibility, but still has difficulty in producing certain sounds, in certain positions, or in certain combinations, and speech may be laboured. Stress and intonation patterns are not native-like and may interfere with communication. Still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public. Has very limited register flexibility though, where a specialist register has been experienced, may have acquired some features of it.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC TASKS (ESL)

Can cope with less routine situations in shops, post office, bank (e.g. asking for a larger size, returning an unsatisfactory purchase), and on public transport (e.g. asking passenger where to get off for unfamiliar destination). Can explain some personal symptoms to a doctor but with limited precision. Can modify utterances to express uncertainty or the hypothetical by single word or other simple devices (e.g. possibly, I think) and has tentative use of if (conditional). Can use simple discourse markers such as so, but, then, because. Often makes inappropriate use of honorifics (e.g. title without surname). In work situation can communicate most routine needs not requiring special register (e.g. out of expendable

a machine overheating) and basic details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g. an accident. Can ask the meaning of an unfamiliar word, or ask for the English word for a demonstrable item. Can generally use I, me, you, we, my, your, but other personal pronouns and possessive adjectives are often hesitant or wrong.

COMMENT

From this level on, the learner has a significant language repertoire permitting comprehension of texts containing an increasing number of unfamiliar language items or cultural references. The learner now has a sufficient language base to benefit greatly in language learning from out-of-class experience and to permit exploration of the language by enquiry from native speakers.

The thrust of development through this level is towards more spontaneity and creativity, increased flexibility but still in essentially survival-type situations with a start to more general social interaction. Ability to comprehend still depends greatly on the native speaker's modifying the language produced. Immediate memory is less restricted, operations less laboured, and some textual facility is starting to emerge.

Cultural interference may create unease in use of second person pronouns and persons' names for learners of some backgrounds. Some pronunciation problems will persist well beyond this stage. The ability to acquire flexibility in social register varies greatly according to the background, sensitivity and personality of the individual. A key feature from here on is the complexification of the language with the emergence of modifying devices, more complex sentences, and discourse markers giving the learner the means to express (however tentatively at 1+) individual meanings (e.g. personal perceptions and attitudes) as well as universal meanings.

'Work' situations should be considered to include school for students.

APPENDIX 3

RSA TEST OF READING SKILLS (RSA 1980)

APPROACHES TO CRITERION REFERENCED ASSESSMENT

Figure 30: Tests of Reading Skills (RSA 1980)

	BASIC LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
SIZE	Needs to understand only the main point(s) of short examples of the limited range of text types specified at this level. A restricted amount of detail may be extracted if attention is directed to it in advance.	Can follow the significant points of longer texts of the range of types specified at this level. Detail may also be extracted if attention is directed to it in advance.	The only restriction on the size of text is the time constraint in the examination context. The totality of all text types specified at this level can be understood.
COM-PLEXITY	Does not need to follow the detail of text construction. Major and subsidiary points need not be differentiated.	Major and subsidiary points will generally be distinguished. The structure of the text will usually be perceived, though questions on this should relate only to explicit markers.	Can handle texts and sequences of texts containing a number of major and subsidiary points. Can perceive the relationships between all of these and the overall structure of the text(s) even when they are not signalled explicitly.
RANGE	Can handle the range of text types and most of the operations specified at this level.	Can handle the range of text types and perform most of the operations specified at this level.	Can handle the range of text types and perform all the operations specified at this level.

	BASIC LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
SPEED	Very limited in speed, possibly as low as 60 wpm. Probably resorts to internal translation.	Can read with comprehension at speeds of 100-200 wpm.	Can read with comprehension at speeds of 200+ wpm.
FLEXI-BILITY	May have basically only one reading style. Switches of topic within the text may not be detected immediately; switches of text type or style may cause confusion.	Can adjust focus of approach to suit the task set - intensive or rapid. Switches of topic within a text can be detected easily. Sequence of text types, topics or styles may cause initial confusion but can be sorted out.	Adopts suitable reading strategies for the task set. Can switch from one reading style to another. Switches of topic, text type, style can be detected and assimilated without confusion.
INDEP-END-ENCE	May need frequent reference to dictionary for word meanings.	Should not need to make much use of reference sources in dealing with 'ordinary' texts at this level.	Reads ordinary texts with little reference support.

APPENDIX 4

PROFILE OPTIONS

OPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Option 1 One-off proficiency test, lesson observation (plus interview) by assessor who compiles report and recommendation	• Cheap • Quick • Fair (same conditions for all)	• Out of step with current approaches to assessment and reporting. • No feed back to teacher; little potential for professional involvement. • Threatening, demotivating. • Not necessarily fair in terms of outcomes.
Option 2 Several assessments of proficiency. Several lessons observed, several interviews by assessor who writes up each session and compiles summative profile and recommendation	• Feedback to teacher allows for constructive criticism. • Helps teacher see strengths and weaknesses. • Helps teacher set own goals for development. • Fair - a more rounded portrayal over time. • More acceptable to teachers than Option 1.	• More expensive. • Time consuming.

OPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Option 3 Same as Option 2 but with teacher also submitting self assessments as part of the formative profiles	As above plus: • More evidence of teachers' ability to self reflect and evaluate the teaching/learning process. • More involvement by teacher, more commitment. • Ownership of process is fostered, leading to more self awareness and professional responsibility.	• Time consuming. • Expensive.
Option 4 Several proficiency assessments: the lesson observations and interviews be undertaken by mentor, peer, teacher trainer or regional LOTE person who writes up a formative profile after each. The assessor makes one final assessment and compiles a summative profile in cooperation with the other 'assessor' and drawing on formative assessments. The teacher should also submit his/her own self assessments.	• Less time consuming and cheaper use of assessor's time. • Teacher may be less threatened working with mentor or other during first few sessions. • Teacher involved with assessment process and can set own goals for development. • Same advantages as described in Option 3. • Involvement of regional LOTE and tertiary institutions will enhance their role and assist in upholding standards generally. • Assist in raising standard of LOTE support at tertiary and regional level.	• Time and money must be allocated to familiarise mentors/peers/teacher trainers/LOTE personnel with the process and standards expected; some form of accreditation may be necessary.

OPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Option 5 Several proficiency assessments. Instead of an assessor doing final observation and compiling summative profile with evidence from formative profiles, the same mentor/peer/teacher trainer/regional LOTE person does the whole assessment and makes final report.	• Existing personnel can do assessment, no further staffing required. • Same advantages as described in Option 4.	• Difficulty in maintaining consistent standards across institutions and regions. • Assessment agency has less control over process. • Time and money to train large number of assessors.

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TEACHERS' REACTIONS TO THE NOTION OF A LOTE MINIMUM SKILLS 'PACKAGE'

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1. **Core teaching skills and language teaching skills**

. Teachers were in agreement that core teaching skills and effective language methodology skills combine to provide the basis for a successful language classroom.

. The majority were in agreement that it would be necessary to be assessed 'in action' as well as contributing lesson plans, teacher-made resources and the like for assessment. (The feeling of needing to be seen in action is particularly strong given the current selection process for Advanced Skills Teachers level 1, which is based purely on a CV and referees' reports.)

. The two major concerns voiced by teachers were:

(a) Who carries out the assessment of core teaching skills and language teaching skills?

(b) What will the criteria be?

. Because the assessment process will not be effective as a one-off but needs to be an ongoing developmental process, teachers, particularly in the bush, are asking who is going to have the time, money, and necessary expertise to assess these skills.

. It should be noted that in a region such as Capricornia, we have a grand total of three LOTE Subject Masters who would be the only credible continuous assessors capable of supplementing one-off visits by an outside assessor.

TEACHERS ASK WHAT IS THE PRICE TAG AND HOW WILL THE PRACTICALITIES OF VAST DISTANCES AND DEARTH OF EVALUATIVE EXPERTISE IN THE LANGUAGE TEACHING AREA BE ADDRESSED.

2. **Cultural awareness and experience**
Target language proficiency

. Teachers were agreed that these could be addressed together.

. There were real concerns amongst at least 50 per cent of teachers surveyed as to their ability to meet criteria for cultural awareness and proficiency standards in their LOTE without an extensive time commitment.

. Many feel very threatened and some would prefer to opt out of LOTE teaching if mandatory testing is put in place.

. The higher a teacher's current level of proficiency the more positive they are to the idea.

. Those teachers who are aware of the PSMC guidelines on annual performance reviews voiced the fear that a measurement of proficiency in their LOTE(s) would be an integral part of their annual performance review.

. Again the who and how of the assessment process is a cause for concern. It was felt that a native speaker should assess where possible. The level of training of the assessors and the moderation and monitoring of their ratings was a further issue raised for clarification.

. Alarmingly, a small proportion of teachers still considered that one could teach primary LOTE with fairly minimal skills!

. The ASLPR scale was acknowledged to be a genuine attempt to measure the ability to use the language in communicative ways. The need to modify it to suit the LOTE context was mentioned by most teachers.

SOME TEACHERS FEEL VERY THREATENED AT THE THOUGHT OF A PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT AND DAUNTED AT THE TIME COMMITMENT NECESSARY TO REACH TARGET LEVELS.

Preservice opinions

Third-year students currently enrolled in ESL/LOTE methodology were enthusiastic about the notion of a Minimum Skills 'Package'.

The notion of continuous assessment of performance is acceptable to students who are still being subjected to such assessment.

> PRESERVICE TEACHERS GENERALLY HAVE A MIND-SET WHICH WOULD ACCOMMODATE THE NOTION OF MEETING MINIMUM SKILLS CRITERIA ON AN ONGOING BASIS.

Major issues

- Cost.
- Availability of suitable assessors (peers and outsiders) in country locations.
- The perceived link between annual performance review and the 'package' needs clarification.
- The accreditation of LOTE professional development for band progression needs to be ensured.
- Some teachers may opt out of LOTE teaching rather than commit the considerable time required to upgrade to target standards.
- Teachers who already possess good skills see the notion of the minimal skills package as highly desirable and key to the ongoing success of the LOTE program.

REPORT OF WORKSHOP GROUP DISCUSSIONS

A discussion paper about a proposed 'LOTE Minimum Skills "Package"', prepared by Ms Laura Commins of the Queensland Education Department and Ms Penny McKay of Griffith University, was presented at the conference by Ms Commins and is included in full in this report. In the paper it was proposed that any LOTE minimum skills assessment package should include the following areas:

- core teaching skills
- language teaching skills
- cultural awareness and experiences
- interpersonal skills
- target language proficiency.

In the workshop group sessions participants discussed issues concerning the nature and content of a minimum skills package, and the implications of such a package for teacher education and for current teachers.

1. Nature and Content of a LOTE Minimum Skills Package

The notion of a LOTE minimum skills package was generally endorsed by the various groups of participants at the conference. However, a number of comments were made about particular aspects of such a package, including suggestions that the package be referred to as a 'LOTE Teacher Profile' or 'LOTE Minimum Skills Profile'.

In debating the nature of a LOTE minimum skills package, many groups considered the question of the various applications of the package. One suggestion which arose was that the package could be used to screen incoming teachers and to determine professional development needs of current teachers. Some participants stated the package should form part of the criteria for employment of new LOTE teachers.

As it became apparent that administration of the package would involve different groups of LOTE teachers, the view was expressed that perhaps the components of the package should vary according to the different client groups: beginning teachers, teachers from overseas and current teachers. It was also claimed that the interpersonal skills required of secondary teachers were quite different from those required of primary teachers. A further comment concerning the content of the package was that cultural awareness should not be regarded as a discrete component, but should be gained in conjunction with target language proficiency.

Some participants considered that assessment with the package should be voluntary, although it was advised that all teachers be encouraged to undergo assessment. The notion that implementation of the package for current teachers must be accompanied by opportunities for professional development received wide support, and was discussed further by groups when considering implications for current teachers.

A note of caution was sounded by one group who stated that there was a need to define clearly the levels of proficiency which can reasonably be achieved through university courses. That different scales of proficiency be developed specific to each language was considered essential by most of those present.

A proposal put forward by some participants was that alternative models could be investigated further, e.g. accreditation of courses similar to the National Association of Accredited Translators and Interpreters model instead of assessment of individuals; or use of assessment undertaken or qualifications awarded by other organisations such as the Goethe Institute.

To ensure the needs of employing authorities were taken into account, it was suggested that employers should advise universities of their requirements for LOTE teachers. One group proposed that the Board of Teacher Registration should develop guidelines for higher education institutions relating to LOTE teacher education courses.

2. Implications of a LOTE Minimum Skills Package for Preservice Teacher Education

A number of statements made by groups related to the need for greater cooperation both within and among universities. In particular, it was suggested that relationships between education and language departments be enhanced. Participants were concerned that the manner in which intending teachers were taught a language should reflect the teaching methodology they would be using in schools. It was suggested that, in their teaching of the language, university language departments should model language teaching methodology appropriate for teaching languages in schools. Such methodology would not only enhance the effectiveness of language program delivery, but also complement the specialised curriculum methodology studies provided by education faculties.

It was suggested that there should be more sharing of resources among the various relevant departments in universities.

Some participants were of the opinion there should be more consistency across universities regarding entry requirements to courses. Another proposal was that there could be a division of expertise in different languages among universities.

A number of groups raised issues which had already been identified but required further consideration. Of particular concern was the necessity to ensure that language proficiency was maintained throughout the full period of preservice education, particularly the period of professional studies. One group asserted that universities should reconsider the structure of preservice programs for LOTE teacher preparation.

Some participants considered that both primary and secondary school LOTE teaching methodology should be included in LOTE teacher preparation programs. One proposition advanced for consideration in order to maximise the language teaching potential of students with proficiency in a LOTE was that students be able to undertake, as their two teaching areas, two levels in the one language, for example primary Japanese and secondary Japanese. It was agreed that teachers should be able to undertake programs which would prepare them to teach in either primary, or secondary, or both primary and secondary schools.

Groups variously called for more ongoing language courses; additional university courses, not necessarily as part of a degree program, to increase proficiency; and 'follow-up' courses to maintain and upgrade proficiency. One group mentioned the possibility of implementing some form of 'assistantship' to increase language proficiency and cultural knowledge.

One notion put forward was that modules for professional development, to include core teaching skills and LOTE teaching skills, could form part of the package and also be the basis of a preservice course.

Several specific proposals were advanced concerning the content of courses. One group made the point that the implications of the focus on proficiency meant there should be a greater emphasis on the communicative approach. Participants advocated the integration of cultural awareness into language programs, and agreed that practical language teaching methodology was essential.

Experience in a country where the target language was widely spoken was considered to be an important component of language programs, and self-funding or scholarships were seen to be two of the possible options for funding this component. The problems of funding for upgrading LOTE programs and for providing in-country experience were viewed as significant issues.

Some of the suggestions made related to the needs of specific groups of teachers. Many participants asserted that all primary teachers required an introduction to LOTE curriculum issues and standard practices, in order to support the LOTE program in their classrooms.

It was recognised that as the teacher preparation needs of native speakers of LOTEs would differ from those of non-native speakers, there should be different preparation programs for the two groups. Programs for native speakers in LOTE teaching should include language teaching methodology and provide opportunities for familiarisation with Australian culture.

Different points of view emerged over the question of assessment, with one group suggesting that the package be used at the end of university courses to determine if students met the requirements, and another group proposing that there should be continuous testing throughout the course rather than one major assessment upon completion which could serve as a disincentive for intending LOTE teachers.

3. Implications of a LOTE Minimum Skills Package for Current Teachers

The notion that implementation of a minimum skills package with current teachers must be closely aligned with opportunities for professional development received wide support in workshop discussion. A number of participants suggested that teachers needed to be prepared sufficiently in advance for assessment of proficiency and that inservice education should be extended if necessary so as to be sufficient to raise proficiency levels. It was considered essential that professional development be flexible, relevant and available in a variety of modes. It was suggested course options could include, for example, a series of workshops followed by a short intensive program, use of self-access materials, and teleconferencing. Increased funding to provide additional courses at universities for LOTE teacher professional development was viewed as necessary as was the provision of more distance education in LOTEs.

Some participants suggested that teachers should advise employers and universities of their professional needs, whilst another point of view was that administrators should identify and support teachers requiring upgrading in language proficiency. One group stressed that teachers without adequate proficiency in a language should not be required to teach that LOTE.

Two groups advocated forms of peer support, either by encouraging teachers to observe other teachers or by implementation of a 'critical friend' model by which a teacher could receive feedback on their teaching from a colleague.

Participants concurred that the minimum skills package should not be perceived by teachers as threatening, but that teachers should receive support and be encouraged to undertake professional development. One group noted that there may be a need to undertake some public relations promotion of the package.

Various suggestions were made for provision of incentives for teachers to undertake professional development. One group stated, in addition to the intrinsic motivation, there should be extrinsic rewards. Most participants agreed that any professional development activities undertaken by LOTE teachers should be recognised for the purposes of promotion and credit towards formal awards. Some groups supported the provision of leave or travel grants. Additional ideas for further recognition included the stating of a LOTE qualification on a teacher registration certificate and the creation of a special LOTE teacher classification by the Department of Education and other employers.

In considering the application of a LOTE minimum skills package with current teachers, one group made the point that the implications of the PSMC's provision for an annual performance review should be taken into account, and any link with the package clarified.

Another issue raised by a number of groups was that there should be improved links and cooperation between university language departments and schools, to allow for greater sharing of expertise and resources to maximise use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the final plenary session of the conference, workshop group reports were presented. The conference planning subcommittee met subsequently to consider the groups' reports, and to develop the recommendations which follow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Nature and Content of a LOTE Minimum Skills Package

1. The LOTE Minimum Skills 'Package' as presented at the conference, which will determine minimum standards for LOTE teachers, should be endorsed.

   (a) This 'package' should be known as a 'LOTE Teacher Profile' or 'LOTE Minimum Skills Profile'.

   (b) The 'package' should be agreed to across all Queensland education sectors.

2. The Board of Teacher Registration, in consultation with employing authorities and universities, should develop guidelines for universities relating to LOTE teacher education courses.

3. The level of proficiency which can reasonably be attained by LOTE teachers must be clearly defined:

   (a) there must be careful consideration of how proficiency is to be measured, and

   (b) scales of proficiency specific to particular languages should be devised.

B. Implications of a LOTE Minimum Skills Assessment Package for Teacher Education

4. The methodology by which students are taught languages in university language departments, as well as the methodology studies in curriculum studies in the education faculty, should be

consistent with the best available knowledge on effective language teaching.

5. The structure of university programs should be reconsidered, particularly with respect to the continuity element and to the maintenance of language proficiency throughout the full period of preservice education (particularly in the period of professional studies).

6. With the focus on proficiency levels, there should be a greater emphasis on the communicative approach to language teaching.

7. Within the State of Queensland, preservice teacher education for teachers of LOTE should provide opportunities for students to prepare to teach:

   (a) in primary schools; or

   (b) in secondary schools; or

   (c) in both primary and secondary schools.

8. University lecturers involved in preservice teacher education of LOTE teachers should be familiar with current school curriculum issues and teaching practices relating to LOTE.

9. Cultural awareness should be included in language programs for LOTE teachers.

10. Experience in a country where the target language is widely spoken should be one component of LOTE teacher preparation.

    (a) Options for funding of in-country experience, including self-funding and scholarships, should be explored.

    (b) Universities should consider forming a consortium to promote cooperation on in-country programs and to facilitate the placement of students.

11. Given that the teacher preparation needs of native speakers of LOTEs will differ from those of non-native speakers, there should be different programs for these two groups. Programs for native

speakers in LOTE teaching should familiarise clients with Australian culture and language teaching methodology.

12. Additional university studies in LOTEs (not necessarily as part of a degree program) should be available to maintain and upgrade proficiency.

13. All primary teachers should be given an introduction to LOTE curriculum issues and standard practices.

C. Implications for Current Teachers

14. Administration of any LOTE Minimum Skills Package must be closely aligned with opportunities for professional development which must be:

    (a) sufficient for the improvement of proficiency and methodology, and

    (b) flexible, relevant and available in a variety of modes.

15. Administrators should support and encourage teachers requiring upgrading of language proficiency and should ensure that teachers whose proficiency in a LOTE is not adequate are not required to teach that LOTE.

16. LOTE teachers should be provided with incentives to undertake professional development; for example, professional development activities should be recognised for the purposes of career progression and credit towards formal awards; and teachers should be provided with opportunities for study leave and travel grants.

APPENDIX I

CONFERENCE BACKGROUND READING

The following material was provided for participants as background reading prior to the conference:

Commins, L and McKay, P (1991) Unpublished Discussion Paper: LOTE Minimum Skills 'Package'.

Department of Education, Queensland (1991) Languages Other Than English: A Statement from the Minister.

Leal, R B (1991) Extract from *Widening Our Horizons: Report of the Review of the Teaching of Modern Languages in Higher Education*. Canberra: AGPS.

APPENDIX II

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